

SUMMER 2021

GUARD DETAIL

A CHRONICLE OF THE MISSISSIPPI ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD



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The Guard Detail is the official magazine of the Mississippi National Guard. It is published three times a year with a circulation of approximately 13,250 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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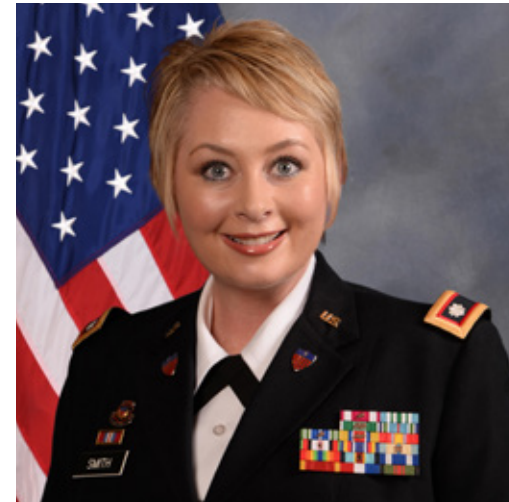
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All submissions should pertain to the Mississippi National Guard and are subject to editing. Contributions and reader comments should be sent to: ng.ms.msarng.list.public-affairs@mail.mil.

COVER PHOTO: An M1A2 Abrams tank assigned to the 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, Mississippi Army National Guard, conducts maneuvers during training at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, California, June 7, 2021. The training helps to ensure that the Soldiers are always ready, always there as warfighters, homeland defenders, and supporters across the globe. (US Army National Guard photo by Spc. Micah Longmire)

Letter From THE EDITOR

Enduring Leadership



"Great thoughts speak only to the thoughtful mind, but great actions speak to all Mankind."
~ President Theodore Roosevelt

Has there ever been someone in your life that went out of their way to help you, mentor you or pave the way for your success? Have you ever had a friend or colleague give advice or help you just because they want to see you and your team succeed? You might recognize this leadership characteristic of Selfless Service as one of the seven Army Values. I have been truly blessed throughout my career with leaders, mentors and friends who have shared their experiences and knowledge.

I recently had the opportunity to recognize one of my mentors, retired Col. Everett J. Bonner, at his retirement ceremony August 7th after 41 years in the Selective Service System. He served with exemplary character in the Louisiana National Guard for 33 years and was appointed as the Louisiana Selective Service System State Director upon his military retirement in 2001.

Bonner was my first military boss. I remember his lessons of encouragement, dedication to service and compassion for others. He strived for excellence in others by setting the standard with his own work ethic and relentless determination. He always examined every situation through the eyes of others, taking time to examine all perspectives and make timely decisions for the good of the organization as well as our service members.

We are always learning and developing as leaders and professionals. I challenge you to be the voice of hope and encouragement in the lives of others. People may not always remember what

you say or even the circumstances of a situation, but they will always remember how you made them feel.

When I look back at the united effort during the COVID-19 response, I am reminded of the exemplary dedication of service by our Mississippi National Guard Soldiers, Airmen, civilian employees and family members. The MSNG served as a force multiplier on the governor's COVID-19 Task Force led by our interagency partners in the Mississippi State Department of Health and the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency.

Our Soldiers and Airmen administered approximately 765,000 vaccinations, 226,000 tests, and processed more than 109,000 lab samples supporting the MSDH. Our logistics professionals traveled more than 665,000 miles throughout our state to deliver over 58 million pieces of personal protective equipment to our hospitals, long-term health care facilities, clinics and testing sites.

Through it all, the MSNG has maintained training requirements ensuring our personnel and equipment are always ready as a combat reserve force for our state and nation.

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
Editor-in-Chief



A special thank you to a true colleague, mentor and friend. Congratulations Col. (Ret.) Everett J. Bonner on your retirement as the Louisiana Selective Service System State Director. Thank you for your 41 years of service to the Selective Service System. (Photo courtesy of Lt. Col. Deidre D. Smith, MSNG Public Affairs)

PUBLISHER
THE ADJUTANT
GENERAL
Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles



EDITOR

Lt. Col. Deidre D. Smith
Director of Public Affairs

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Mr. Daniel Szarek
Dep. Director of Public Affairs

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Mr. Joseph Cooley

STAFF

2nd Lt. Michael Needham
1st Sgt. William Valentine
Staff Sgt. Connie Jones
Tech Sgt. D'Markus Burrell
Sgt. Jovi Prevot
Mr. Justin Dixon

FOR COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS
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2nd Lieutenant Caleb Franklin

I'm a recently commissioned second lieutenant in the Mississippi Army National Guard (MSARNG) and I am blessed to be able to speak to my fellow guardsmen. Having been in the MSNG for almost four years now, I have gotten to see the many great people and opportunities the military has to offer.

I commissioned as an aviation officer and currently serve as a section leader in the 1108th Aviation Group (TASMG) in Gulfport. I am originally from Madison and have always had a passion to join the military. Since I was in middle school, being able to fight and serve my country was always an aspiration of mine. I wanted to pursue the officer route due to the high standards officers are held to and their ability to serve others, but I wanted to complete college first. When a colleague of mine told me I could pursue becoming an officer through the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) while attending college, I was hooked.

ROTC was a great experience for me and allowed me to grow into the officer I am today. Of the few routes to become an officer, ROTC is the longest, lasting four years of college rather than the standard 3 to 4 months of federal Officer Candidate School (OCS). One way that ROTC benefited me was by helping me become proficient at managing my time during college. Having 0545 PT, along with classes, labs, and other duties, forced me to use my time wisely and helped create a habit of being disciplined and productive in both my military and civilian life.

Being part of the MSNG and ROTC was a big factor in developing me as a leader. Being in an actual unit and seeing how the chain of command works and seeing tasks being carried out was very beneficial.

I also saw great examples of officers and senior leaders putting the development of their Soldiers first. These experiences showed me how important it is to develop yourself, your Soldiers, and even your peers.

I am excited to see what the future holds for my military career as an Aviation officer. As of now, I have not been assigned a specific platform to fly so the horizon is vast for me. However, I know I will get to use the leadership skills I have been working on the last four years to lead and serve Soldiers.

'It is my duty to put my Soldiers first' - I have been hearing this ever since I started pursuing this route and I am looking forward to finally putting it into action. I am also intently awaiting basic officer leader course and flight school so that I can start becoming a proficient pilot to serve our nation in the tasks and missions I am assigned.

To all those reading this who are serving or have served our nation, I want to thank you for the sacrifices you have made for this country. Your willingness to serve is very much appreciated by me and the rest of this great country.

Thank you.

2nd Lt. Caleb Franklin
Aviation Officer,
1108th Aviation Group
Mississippi Army
National Guard

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER



Storms are all around us. Sometimes we see them coming and sometimes we don't. Oftentimes we question why things happen when they do. In a Charlie Brown episode, I remember him building a beautiful, strong sand castle. He had been working on it for hours making it a strong fortress of sand. As he stood back to admire his handiwork a storm came up. He watches the rain come in to sweep away his sand castle. His beautiful masterpiece was leveled. Charlie Brown said to himself, "There has to be a lesson in this, but I'm not sure what it is."

This story illustrates how many times our own sand castles are swept away. Even as military personnel, we witness so many storms. As a Chaplain, I observe many behavioral health issues. Anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress, and suicide ideations are among some of the most prevalent storms I witness. All of us have our storms and no one is excluded. Storms come from so many different directions. Some are caused by other people, sometimes we cause our own storms, and sometimes they just appear unexpectedly from no source at all.

One of my favorite stories from scripture is when the disciples are caught in a storm themselves and were rescued by Jesus. It was nearly 3 a.m. The Sea of Galilee had a torrential storm making navigation increasingly difficult. Quite frankly, they didn't see a way to the other side. The weather was bleak. The vessel they were in was having a difficult time with the tossing of the sea. They became frightened as to the future.

These kinds of storms in life always reveal our true character. How we respond and how we react to these storms, tell us a lot about who we are and the chemistry we are made of. Sometimes the winds of life are hard to face and possibly lead us to fear. We can become so

preoccupied with our circumstances that we can start to sink if somehow we are tossed from our comfort zone.

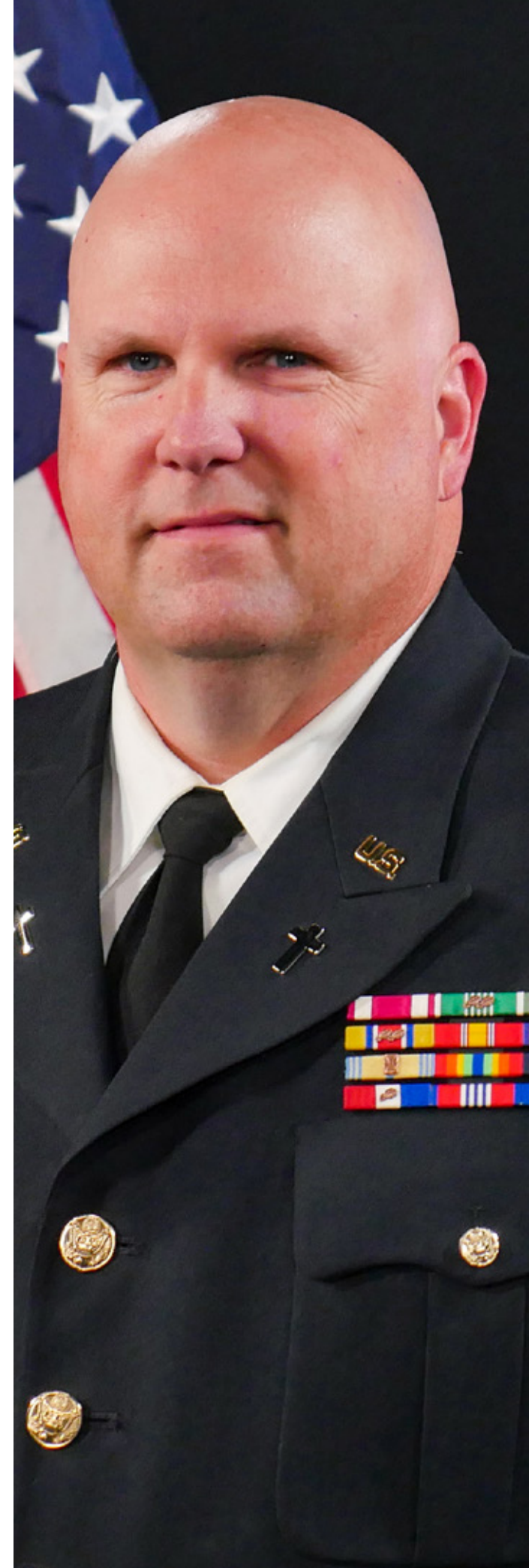
There are ways we can assist those around us that are having a difficult time in life. Maybe your personal battle is conflict in your marriage or relationship. There is a program that the MSARNG offers called Strong Bonds that can help facilitate and enrich your relationship with your spouse. Get in touch with your Strong Bonds office for more information. Maybe your personal battle is with finances and you are having difficulty finding a good job. There are also capabilities to help with job placement through our ESGR. Possibly it could be that you are having anxiety and depressive thoughts and you need to talk to someone. Our Director of Psychological Health, Dr. Fameika Thomas, and her team are available. Our suicide interventions teams can assist in helping our military personnel with these issues. All contacts can be found on the MS National Guard Outreach Services mobile application.

Not everyone has personal challenges in their lives so I don't pretend to associate everyone in the same generic sense. However, there are some who have had more difficulties during life's journey than others. If you or anyone else needs to make contact with a Chaplain, please do not hesitate to contact your local Chaplain. We are here to help. You can also find these contacts on the app mentioned earlier in the Chaplain's Corner.

When storms arise, I encourage you to maintain resiliency and "fight the good fight, finish the race and keep the faith." I Timothy 4:7.

For God and Country,

Chaplain (Maj.) David Morris
Full Time Support Chaplain
Brigade Chaplain, 185th ECAB
601-313-6226/601-624-0963



SNAPSHOTS



A C-130 Hercules from the Wyoming Air National Guard fires off flares during Southern Strike 2021, at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, April 25, 2021. The flares are an aerial infrared countermeasure to deflect incoming heat seeking surface-to-air or air-to-air missiles. More than 1,200 service members participated in this year's Southern Strike exercise, which is an annual training hosted by the Mississippi National Guard to increase combat readiness across all branches of the U.S. Military. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Jovi Prevot)



**SCAN
HERE**





Maj. Gen. Trent Kelly, assistant adjutant general, Mississippi Army National Guard, stands with newly commissioned officers at a commissioning ceremony at Mississippi State University, Spring 2021. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Jovi Prevot)

MSNG WELCOMES NEW WAVE OF SECOND LIEUTENANTS

Story by 1st Lt. Sarah E. Tingle & Lt. Col. Deidre D. Smith
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office

The Mississippi National Guard welcomed 30 newly-commissioned second lieutenants during this past graduation season.

The new officers were commissioned through the Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC), which allowed them to attend college while training to become officers. The ROTC is the largest officer-producing organization within the U.S. military.

These new officers graduated from five Mississippi schools: three from Alcorn State University, five from Jackson State University, seven from Mississippi State University (MSU), 13 from the University of Mississippi, and two from the University of Southern Mississippi.

"More than 50% of Army officers received their commissions through ROTC," said Maj. Christopher Davis, ROTC manager, Mississippi Army National Guard. "ROTC prepares students to become future officers and provides the opportunity to enjoy the full college experience at the same time. The Mississippi National Guard is fortunate to have

several ROTC programs throughout the state that produce superior officers to lead our ranks."

2nd Lt. Caleb Franklin graduated and was commissioned through the ROTC program at MSU. Franklin was previously enlisted in the MSNG but decided to further his education and become an officer.

"Although Officer Candidate School was an option, I valued the benefits ROTC offered which allowed me to work towards being an officer during school rather than after. I think this is one of the biggest advantages of ROTC and I am thankful for that," said Franklin.

2nd Lt. Samantha Renson graduated and was commissioned through the ROTC program at the University of Mississippi. She's been preparing her leadership skills while in the program and is starting her career in the Adjutant General Corps. Renson came to Ole Miss from Pennsylvania and decided to stay in Mississippi.

"I decided to go into the MSNG because when I came down originally for the beginning of college, I immediately fell in love with the small town of Oxford and wanted to be able to continue to have that feeling throughout college and for the foreseeable future," said Renson.

The MSNG is proud to have ROTC

programs in the state that can identify quality officer candidates that want to make a difference in the Soldiers they lead and continue the tradition of success and excellence.



Maj. Gen. Trent Kelly, assistant adjutant general - Army, Mississippi National Guard, receives an award from Lt. Col. Jason R. Posey, Professor of Military Sciences, Mississippi State University, during the spring commissioning ceremony, May 7, 2021. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Cadet Jarvis Mace)



Newly commissioned officers raise their hands to be sworn in during a commissioning ceremony at the University of Mississippi, Spring 2021. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Lt. Col. Deidre D. Smith)

"ROTC PREPARES STUDENTS TO BECOME FUTURE OFFICERS AND PROVIDES THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENJOY THE FULL COLLEGE EXPERIENCE AT THE SAME TIME..."

- MAJ. CHRISTOPHER DAVIS



Newly commissioned officers pose for a photo following a commissioning ceremony at Alcorn State University, Spring 2021. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by 1st Lt. Sarah Tingle)



155TH ARMORED BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM COMPLETES FOURTH NTC ROTATION

Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment, Wyoming Army National Guard, provide overwatch security as their unit assaults a training objective during a simulated assault at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, California, June 12, 2021. The NTC rotation allows the 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, Mississippi Army National Guard, and supporting units, such as the 1-297th, to build teamwork and maintain combat readiness for future missions. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Cadet Jarvis Mace)

Story by Staff Sgt. Connie Jones
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office

Training is a requirement of readiness. Units must train in diverse terrain in order to remain a combat-ready force. The 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT) and supporting elements across nine states completed their fourth National Training Center (NTC) rotation at Fort Irwin, California, June 24, 2021.

The mission of NTC is to “train rotational training units, joint, interagency, and multi-national partners to build and sustain readiness to fight and win.”

An NTC rotation provides a replication of the conditions that are common in combat; the training provided gives relevant experience in the current operational environments. There’s no desert in Mississippi to train in so NTC is a unique opportunity, said Maj.

Gen. Janson D. Boyles, the adjutant general of Mississippi.

“About every four to five years, the National Guard cycles through a National Training Center event,” he said. “There are certain advantages to this area for our training purposes. It’s just a great training venue. It’s hot, it’s hard, it’s uncomfortable. It’s very realistic, comparatively speaking, to our fight in the desert in Afghanistan and Iraq.”

Planning an NTC rotation requires coordination. It begins with the training objectives for the unit set by the brigade commander, the adjutant general and the senior trainer. The senior trainer is one who works with the rotational unit and the Operations Group at NTC to help design the exercise and provides mentorship to the brigade as they are preparing for the training. The Operations Group, or Ops group, is a team of observer controller/trainers (OC/T) assigned to NTC,

who are there to assist and offer suggestions for a more beneficial experience from the rotation, said Brig. Gen. Jimmie L. Cole, the land component commander of the Tennessee Army National Guard and the senior trainer for this rotation.

“We determine what the training objectives are going to be based on where the unit is and where they want to be when they come out of the rotation,” said Cole. “You have dialogues all the way up to the FORSCOM [U.S. Army Forces Command] commander where you have to brief the training objectives for the brigade, get those approved, then you discuss what their training path is from that point forward in preparing to come to NTC.”

The training path generally includes several smaller-scale exercises in the years leading up to NTC, such as the eXportable Combat Training Capability (XCTC) exercise and Multi-Echelon Integrated Brigade Training (MiBT). During these exercises, Soldiers are able to rehearse various maneuver techniques as well as other combat scenarios.

“We’re back to large-scale combat operations, understanding maintenance and sustainment of a force and how to apply the things that they learned long ago and reapplying them out in the field, like learning the maneuver techniques and gunnery techniques,” said Col. Jason P. Nelson, commander of the 155th ABCT.

These techniques require fine tuning throughout the process. It is key to adjust the rotation as needed so that the unit can get repetitive practice with objectives they may need to improve upon, said Cole.

“Sometimes if we have set certain objectives for the unit and we see where they would benefit if we did that same objective over again, we might run certain missions multiple times. It’s very beneficial for the unit itself because they get several repetitions and iterations to do the mission,” Cole said. “It gives the battalions, companies and platoons an opportunity to build it in their muscle movements. The more repetitions that somebody gets at doing something, the better they’re going to be. So instead of just rushing through from objective to objective, we’ve been able to stop, start again, go through it again, get more repetition so that ultimately they’ll come out much better.”

This mission fine tunes leaders and Soldiers alike, testing all capabilities, including sustainment, while actually in the harsh conditions, said Boyles.

“This is all about developing leaders. It’s



Sgt. James Savell, a motor transport operator of the 106th Support Battalion, Mississippi Army National Guard, fires an AT4-CS confined space light anti-armor weapon during a live fire exercise at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, California, June 16, 2021. The 106th is a part of the 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, MSARNG, training to remain a combat-ready force. (U.S. Army National Guard Photo by Cadet Jarvis Mace)



An Apache helicopter from the 1st Battalion, 149th Aviation Regiment, Mississippi Army National Guard, comes in for a landing at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, California, June 10, 2021. The 1-149th are supporting the 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, whose skills and capabilities are being honed by participation in intense training exercises such as this NTC rotation. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Micah Longmire)

all about testing the systems that we use so that we can communicate and move down range, so that we can order equipment and supplies. We test those things in this environment. We take a lot for granted when we are just simply working in a room or a planning cell,” Boyles said. “So this introduces those elements into your problem sets. Our leaders and problem solvers have to work really hard to deliver fuel, food, and water. Think about delivering ice in this type of environment. So it’s a great training event for our NCOs, our officers, and our Soldiers.”

The biggest advantage the brigade had while going through the rotation was their positive attitude, said Maj. James Braudis, brigade executive officer trainer with Ops Group.

“An OC/T can only do their job as well as the person they’re coaching wants to listen. If you interact with someone who doesn’t listen to your feedback and doesn’t implement the lessons learned, they’re not going to get very far,” said Braudis.

“Across the board, this unit had a positive attitude and were willing to accept our coaching in order to get better.”

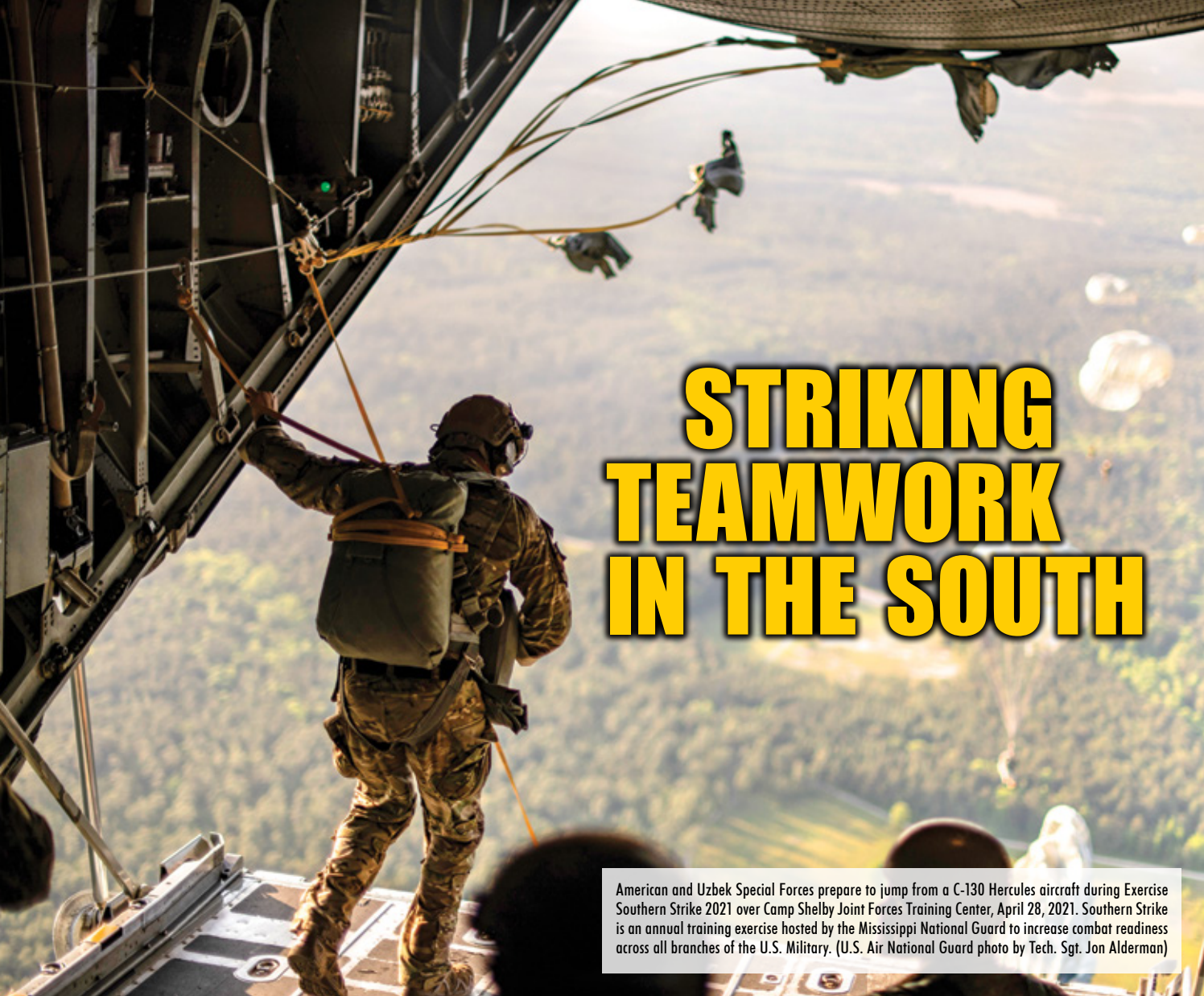
Nelson defined an NTC rotation as successful if there are no injuries and if everyone involved grows, including himself. He deemed this rotation successful, and he couldn’t be prouder.

“I’ve absolutely grown and I think every Soldier out here has learned something during the rotation. So as long as the brigade is better today than we were yesterday, then we’ve been successful and it has been a good rotation,” Nelson said.

“Not only did they fight the general conditions, they fought the heat – the triple-digit temperatures have made it extremely difficult and every single Soldier stepped up, fought through and got the mission accomplished. I can’t thank each and every Soldier enough for everything they’ve done and the hard work they put into it.”

SCAN HERE





STRIKING TEAMWORK IN THE SOUTH

American and Uzbek Special Forces prepare to jump from a C-130 Hercules aircraft during Exercise Southern Strike 2021 over Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, April 28, 2021. Southern Strike is an annual training exercise hosted by the Mississippi National Guard to increase combat readiness across all branches of the U.S. Military. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Jon Alderman)

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

The common definition of camaraderie is, “a feeling of friendliness, goodwill, and familiarity among the people in a group.” A vital piece of military ethos, camaraderie is the guiding spirit of military service - to be something bigger than ourselves.

Many of those who serve want to be a part of something bigger, something grander, something that has purpose. It is that spirit of service and camaraderie that allowed us to hold together as one country during the most dire domestic crisis we had ever faced and it is what helped the Greatest Generation emerge victorious in World War II.

Members from every branch of service, working in conjunction with each other and in total synchronization is how we create something larger than ourselves.

This is the vision of the Southern

Strike training exercise held annually at the Combat Readiness Training Center in Gulfport, Miss. This year marked the 10th iteration of the exercise, which takes almost a year to plan, and is designed to increase the overall combat effectiveness of the units involved.

“We’re liaising with ground units, special forces units, different branches, we’ve got the full joint spectrum here,” said Col. Cynthia L. Smith, exercise director for Southern Strike 2021. “Marines, Army and Air Force Reserves, National Guard, Active Duty; all those components together, they’re basically a one-stop shop to hit any flavor of training that you can imagine.”

Each year, members from every service of the Department of Defense converge at the CRTC and engage in joint-service training profiles that focus on combat effectiveness in varied conditions and terrain --Soldiers and Marines running ground

operations through mud, sand and rain, Sailors storming in amphibious support from sea, and Airmen in heavy aircraft controlling the skies.

Approximately 1,200 service members from the active, guard and reserve components of the U.S. military participated in this joint, international combat exercise. Foreign allies come from places like Niger, Uzbekistan and the Netherlands to take part in the training.

Southern Strike 2021 saw a few “firsts” in its history as an annual training exercise in Mississippi. This was the first iteration of the event in which a Hellfire missile was launched in the airspace by a MQ-9 “Reaper”, with a successful hit on target. This is also the first time Space Command and a Cyber Team could integrate into the exercise.

One of the main concerns for this exercise, and for the U.S. military moving forward is superiority of the cyber do-

main, and how ground forces interact with this new frontier of war. On this strange, new front, the United States military is already preparing for the fight ahead. While the U.S. has always utilized Special Operations forces to supplement their warfighting capabilities, they, along with Cyber and Space operations, are taking center stage.

“Cyber is the domain we are reaching for, because of our location here on the coast, and all of the 11,000 square miles of airspace that we have,” said Smith. “What we have in place is vital to going forward.”

The exercise serves to highlight the facilities and capabilities of the Mississippi National Guard, said Smith. “That has a trickle effect, so participants who come here may also identify CRTC as a place that they want to come back to for their own exercises, which also helps the local area economically.”

Another first for this year’s exercise was the presence of the VAQ-209 Attack Squadron, who were flying their signature EA-18G “Growler” electronic attack aircraft, also known as the “Star Warriors.”

“Our role is to support other aircraft, and Airmen and Soldiers on the ground,” said Cmdr. Dustin Engel,

commanding officer of VAQ-209 attack squadron, assigned to Naval Air Station Whidbey Island in Washington.

“It allows us to integrate with units we don’t normally work with, for example, the Air National Guard from Wyoming. We don’t normally work with C-130s, so this exercise allowed for extra planning and missions with that unit, and it is a chance for both units to learn, to develop, and to understand the mission that each unit has, and to prepare a more capable plan,” said Engel.

“When we deploy, one of our primary customers is Special Operations Forces, and the objectives they need to carry out. Being an electronic warfare unit, we can assist with that,” said Lt. Col. Mark Masterson of the 216th Space Control Squadron, assigned to the 195th Wing of the California Air National Guard. “This exercise gives us a great opportunity to work face to face with that customer. Southern Strike gives us a great venue to refine techniques, tactics and procedures that we would use in the real world that keep our operators sharp.”



U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Jon Holland, an aviator with the 187th Airlift Squadron, pilots a C-130 Hercules aircraft assigned to the 153d Airlift Wing, Wyoming Air National Guard as part of Exercise Southern Strike 2021, April 28, 2021. Southern Strike is an annual training exercise hosted by the Mississippi National Guard to increase combat readiness across all branches of the U.S. Military. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Jon Alderman)



A C-130 Hercules aircraft from the Wyoming Air National Guard receives American and Uzbek Special Forces for parachute training as part of Exercise Southern Strike at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, April 28, 2021. Southern Strike is an annual training exercise hosted by the Mississippi National Guard to increase combat readiness across all branches of the U.S. Military. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Jon Alderman)



Senior Enlisted Leader Change of Responsibility

Story by Lt. Col. Deidre D. Smith
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office

The Mississippi National Guard celebrated the success of Command Sgt. Maj. John T. Raines III, and welcomed the new Senior Enlisted Leader, Command Sgt. Maj. Silvester Tatum, during a change of responsibility ceremony at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, April 22, 2021. This ceremonial gesture signifies the transition of authority between the incoming and outgoing senior enlisted leader as well as trust and confidence Boyles has in Tatum as he accepts his new role. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Jovi Prevot)

The Change of Responsibility ceremony is etched in military customs and courtesies to strengthen the respect for incoming authority, which is vital to the success and unity of every military organization. The ceremony displays the customary transfer of authority by passing the formal colors from the outgoing enlisted leader to the adjutant general, symbolic of his release of responsibility, then the adjutant gen-

eral passes the colors to the new senior enlisted leader symbolizing his faith and trust in him.

Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles, the adjutant general of Mississippi, hosted the time-honored change of responsibility ceremony observing the official transfer of authority from the outgoing to the incoming senior enlisted leader. This ceremony celebrates military service and welcomes the new, most senior non-commissioned officer in the Mississippi National Guard.

"It has been the single most humbling assignment of my career to serve as the MSNG Command Senior Enlisted Leader," said Command Sgt. Maj. John T. Raines III, reflecting on his distinguished career.

"I started this assignment serving concurrently as the state command sergeant major and the command senior enlisted



Command Sgt. Maj. John T. Raines III addresses the audience in his farewell speech to the Soldiers and Airmen of the Mississippi National Guard during the change of responsibility ceremony at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, Mississippi, April 22, 2021. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Jovi Prevot)



Command Sgt. Maj. John T. Raines III, outgoing senior enlisted leader of the Mississippi National Guard, Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles, the adjutant general, and Command Sgt. Maj. Silvester Tatum, the incoming senior enlisted leader, march in at the beginning of the change of responsibility ceremony at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, Mississippi, April 22, 2021. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Jovi Prevot)

leader," Raines said. "After a few years of serving in both positions, I was introduced to the way many other states were organized, which better supported the way their commanders were assigned."

The other states had a senior enlisted leader/advisor tied to each of the three

command positions on the officer side; the Adjutant General, the Assistant Adjutant General - Army, and the Assistant Adjutant General - Air.

"With this change, we were able to promote someone to represent both the Army and the Air on the enlisted side, with the

position serving in a joint role over both, working alongside the adjutant general," said Raines. "This change allowed us to focus more on our individual assignments and enabled us to concentrate on enlisted personnel management as never before."

Due to the SEL role across the states, the senior leaders saw significant changes in personnel management on both the Army and Air sides. It also played a critical role in influencing national policy that resulted in more Soldiers being trained and promoted.

"At the end of my tour my single largest achievement is the MSNG's reputation to accomplish any mission they are given. We have never asked more of the men and women of the National Guard and they continue to deliver in an exceptional manner," said Raines.

Raines offered words of appreciation and encouragement to Tatum as he begins his new role as the senior enlisted leader for the MSNG.

"As [Tatum] assumes responsibility of the Mississippi National Guard, I would just say for him to appreciate the assignment as it flies by," he said. "I would also say to him that the secret to being successful doesn't change with additional responsibility. Take care of your people and don't be afraid to be their voice. If you do that they will take care of you."

Tatum, a Rolling Fork native, says it's a true honor to take on the role and responsibility of the SEL.

"I will take great pride and effort to achieve goals and ensure overall wellbeing for every service member, and I will uphold the Army values across the force."

Tatum expands on his goals as the new senior enlisted leader saying, "Every organization needs strong leadership to achieve success and that starts with the Sergeant Major and Command Master Chief. I will maximize the state's leadership potential and coordinate with the E9's to mentor and groom our current workforce to become effective future leaders.

"I understand the importance of strategic communications and strong collaboration with senior officers to ensure that the adjutant general's guidance and directives are successfully met at every command level. My goals of success will be obtained with a high level of readiness garnered through collaborative leadership, relevant training, and molded by the professionalism and initiative of all Soldiers and Airmen serving within the Mississippi National Guard."

Spc. Kysam Moody, assigned to 3656th Quartermaster Company, Mississippi Army National Guard, moves through the obstacle course at the Mississippi National Guard Best Warrior Competition at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, near Hattiesburg, Mississippi, April 20, 2021. The competition showcases each competitor's Soldier skills, physical endurance, and knowledge. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Benjamin Tomlinson)

BEST WARRIOR COMPETITION 2021

Story by Sgt. Victoria Smith
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office

The Mississippi National Guard held their annual state Best Warrior Competition at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, Mississippi, April 19-21, 2021.

The competition is a combination of challenging events that test competitors' mental and physical readiness as well as their ability to perform under pressure.

The events included a 12-mile ruck march, an obstacle course, multiple weapons ranges, an Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT), Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT), a Public Affairs interview, several medical tasks, a board to test their Army knowledge, and essay writing.

The Soldiers competed in two categories: enlisted and noncommissioned officer.

"The most challenging day was when we

had to complete the 12-mile ruck march followed by a call for fire event, and then went immediately into an APFT with three hours of sleep. It was exhausting," said Sgt. 1st Class Cody Odom, the winner of the NCO category at this year's competition.

In addition to the Army and Air Guardsmen, soldiers from Uzbekistan also competed as foreign nation partners to the state of Mississippi. Although it is a competition, the competitors were able to form relationships and work with one another.

"The competition is one of the best things a Soldier can do," Odom said. "It is a great event to test Soldier readiness. You also get to build comradery with the competitors you are facing."

The winner of the enlisted category was Spc. Wesley Byrd, of Company C, 106th Support Battalion, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team.

"It was an honor to represent my unit and brigade. I competed with some great guys, including the Uzbek soldiers," said Byrd.

Odom was equally honored to earn the title.

"To be the state best warrior winner is a monumental achievement. It is a chance to represent one of the greatest states in the nation at a regional level," he said.

The winners of the competition went on to represent Mississippi in the Region III Best Warrior Competition, held at Fort McClellan Training Center in May.

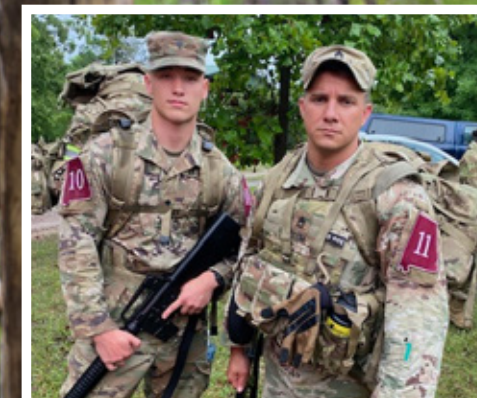
Byrd recommends that everyone try the competition during their career.

"There ain't nothing to it but to do it. Just get out there and perform. After I did it, I learned so much about myself," said Byrd. "I would encourage everyone to go for it. It was a great experience."



SCAN
HERE

Spc. Wesley Byrd, assigned to 106th Support Battalion, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, Mississippi Army National Guard, moves through the obstacle course at the Mississippi National Guard Best Warrior Competition at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, Mississippi, April 20, 2021. The competition showcases each competitor's Soldier skills, physical endurance, and knowledge. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Benjamin Tomlinson)



Spc. Wesley Byrd, assigned to 106th Support Battalion, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, Mississippi Army National Guard, and Sgt. 1st Class. Cody Odom, assigned to the Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, Mississippi Army National Guard, pose for a photo following a ruck march April 20, 2021. Odom and Byrd were the winners of this year's competition. (Courtesy photo)



Sgt. 1st Class. Cody Odom, assigned to the Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, Mississippi Army National Guard, competes in the marksmanship event at the Mississippi National Guard Best Warrior Competition, Mississippi, April 20, 2021. The competition showcases each competitor's Soldier skills, physical endurance, and knowledge. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Benjamin Tomlinson)



2nd Lt. James Lott III, 172d Airlift Wing, Mississippi Air National Guard, gives a speech after being sworn in as Clinton's Ward 6 Alderman at the Wood Activity & Therapeutic Center in Clinton, Mississippi, July 1, 2021. (U.S. National Guard photo by Justin Dixon)

MISSISSIPPI GUARDSMAN SWORN IN AS ALDERMAN FOR CLINTON, MISS.

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

The city of Clinton's Board of Aldermen recently welcomed their only Mississippi Air National Guard member, 2nd Lt. James Lott III. He was sworn in as Clinton's Alderman for Ward 6 during a ceremony at the Wood Activity & Therapeutic Center, July 1, 2021.

Lott grew up in Clinton and has served in the Mississippi Air National Guard since 2007. He currently serves as a Health Services Administrator for the 172d Airlift Wing.

During the coronavirus pandemic, Lott was designated as the Mississippi National Guard officer-in-charge at the Governor's

COVID-19 Task Force site Smith-Wills Stadium in Jackson. He said accepting this position during a national emergency was his duty.

"As a Guardsman, we have to be ready if we are called upon," Lott said. "However, I accepted this position because I wanted a challenge. I believed that placing myself in this uncomfortable situation would be the greatest way for me to grow."

The most challenging obstacle Lott faced as a leader of the COVID site was integrating the work environment of both Soldiers and Airmen. However, he said that obstacle was overcome by understanding each other's differences and working together as a team.

"It took some adaptations at first, but I



2nd Lt. James Lott III (left), 172d Airlift Wing, Mississippi Air National Guard, stands next to Lt. Col. Jeremy Parker, former commander of the Mississippi National Guard COVID-19 Task Force during a news interview at Smith Wills Stadium in Jackson, Mississippi, April 13, 2021. (U.S. National Guard photo by Justin Dixon)



2nd Lt. James Lott III, 172d Airlift Wing, Mississippi Air National Guard, was sworn in as Clinton's Ward 6 Alderman during a ceremony at the Wood Activity & Therapeutic Center in Clinton, Mississippi, July 1, 2021. (U.S. National Guard photo by Justin Dixon)

realized that we had to understand each other's culture. Each branch has their own way of performing tasks, but we had to realize we're all fighting the same fight," he said.

Lott believes that working in this unusual setting has given him the necessary skills to serve as Clinton's Alderman for Ward 6.

"Just having the broad experience of interacting with people from all over Mississippi, by listening to their concerns, praise, and criticism, is one of the best tools I've gained in moving forward as Alderman," Lott said. "Hopefully, I am able to serve Ward 6 and the city of Clinton well as I grow as a leader and a mentor."

OCS CLASS 34 STILL GOING STRONG



(left to right) Bottom Row: Tracy Matthews, Rick Weaver, Chris Boozer, James McRaney, Lynn Pippen, Hugh McCallum, Dennis Milam, Joey Lyon, Steven Floyd, J.D. Ford
2nd Row: Gregory Divinity, Willie Thornton, Tony Lambert, Tommy King, Ronald Bellon, John Necaise, Michael Cleveland, Glenn Flowers
3rd Row: Guy Reedy, Kyle Grant, John Brewer, Kelly Mims, John Shumpert, Scott Lindley, Pete Williams, Milt Griffith, John McKay
Top Row: Chis Epps, Steven Ryan, Eric Haliburton, William Walley, Jason Baily, Jeff Samples, Glen Adams, James Rogers, Paul Lyon

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

The National Guard depends on strong leaders to rise through the ranks as commissioned officers. The ascending careers of officers allows them to gain valuable problem-solving skills and expertise which they utilize throughout the remainder of their military careers. Many of the commissioned officers in the Mississippi Army National Guard started their careers off as enlisted Soldiers, but always strived for more education and leadership opportunities, which steered them towards the Officer Candidate School (OCS).

"The fact that a good number of graduates from the great MMA [Mississippi Military Academy] 34th OCS Class are still serving is a testament to the quality of training and mentorship from the program, along with the caliber of the individuals that made up our class," said Col. William Walley, deputy chief of facilities maintenance office. "We have class members still actively serving in the Mississippi Army National Guard in both uniform and civilian status, not to mention class members in the U.S. Army still actively serving."

Several graduates from Class 34 are currently serving in the Mississippi Army National Guard from the ranks of senior commissioned officers to brigadier general.

Class 34 continues to make its mark on the Mississippi Army National Guard and will add to their legacy in the years to come.

Col. Troy Flowers, former MSARNG State Aviation Officer, said, "OCS Class 34 is somewhat of a Who's Who currently serving in the Mississippi Army National Guard. If you look across our organization you will see the commanding general of the 66th Troop Command, commander of Camp Shelby and the commander of Camp McCain, just to name a few, and I am most proud to say I was simply a member of this OCS Class."

OCS class 34 started with 162 Soldiers being tested for admittance into the school, where only 130 Soldiers passed the test. For their first drill, only 93 candidates showed up, for the second drill, only 78 Soldiers remained. As the class pushed on, 67 candidates made it to annual training and 38 remained committed to excellence, earning them the gold bar.

"OCS was the most demanding military school I have ever attended," said Lt. Col. Glenn Adams, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team executive and administrative officer. "The curriculum was focused on inserting you in a leadership position with intense pressure to see how you could perform. That school design taught us at an early stage in our young careers how to handle pressure and make sound decisions."

For class 34, OCS was broken up into three phases. Phase I is where the challenges began for the candidates, the days started at 4:30 a.m. and the training was intense day in and day out. The final test of Phase I consisted of a grueling ruck march back to the company area. Upon their return, class 34 watched as the graduates of class 33 earned their gold bar on the last day of annual training.

"I remember watching class 33 graduate. They were a group of highly qualified officers that achieved a significant accomplishment," said Brig. Gen. Michael Cleveland, commander of 66th Troop Command. "They looked sharp. They were professionals who stood tall with a strong sense of pride."

After surviving the first annual training, the candidates of class 34 had to prepare for their monthly drill. The reward for working as a team allowed them to earn Junior Candidate status, each of them knowing that they were one step closer to earning their commission.

"I think the biggest challenge was just learning to work together as a team and understand how to help each other throughout the program," said Col. Millard (Guy) Reedy, commander of the Camp McCain Training Center. "We had a lot of candidates in the class that had a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22



210TH FINANCE BATTALION WELCOMES SGT. MAJ. ELLIS

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

U.S. Army Sgt. Maj. Angela Ellis, of the 210th Finance Battalion, Mississippi Army National Guard, made battalion history upon her promotion on April 2, 2021.

Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Young, state command sergeant major for the Mississippi Army National Guard, revealed during Ellis' promotion ceremony that she is the first woman to be promoted to Sergeant Major in the 210th Finance Battalion. This is a major accomplishment for a woman serving in the military.

"There are a little over 8,600 enlisted Soldiers in the Mississippi Army National Guard, 66 of those authorizations are Sergeant Major, E-9, positions," Young said during the ceremony. "If you look at our Armed Services as a whole and the population of the United States of America, less than one percent serve. So, to make it to less than one percent of that one percent

is monumental."

She assumed the position of sergeant major of the 210th Finance Battalion during a change of responsibility ceremony May 1, 2021. The battalion said farewell to Sgt. Maj. Dexter Johnson.

Ellis is a native of Yazoo City, Miss. She first enlisted in 1998 as a finance specialist in the Headquarters Company, 210th Finance Battalion, MSARNG.

She revealed that it was a persuasive recruiter named Robert Felton who encouraged her to join the Mississippi National Guard.

"If it wasn't for his persistence, I would not be here," said Ellis. "When I was in high school, I believe every time Mr. Felton saw me he would ask, 'Angie, when are you going to join the Guard?' and I would tell him every time that I'm not."

Ellis said Mr. Felton continued to ask until she finally told him, "Okay, Mr. Felton, sign me up."

"I said it not really thinking that he would show up to my house the next day

Sgt. Maj. Angela Ellis, incoming sergeant major of the 210th Finance Battalion, holds the unit colors during the change of responsibility ceremony, May 1, 2021, at Raymond Road Readiness Center in Jackson, Mississippi. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Benjamin Tomlinson)

with papers in his hands, and for that, every time I receive a promotion, I always tell him thank you," said Ellis.

She said this promotion is significant to her as a Black woman.

"There have only been a handful of females in our state to make it to this level. We are living in times where women are rising, and I'm very grateful for those who have paved the way for African-American women," said Ellis.

Sgt. Maj. Alecia D. Gates (Ret.) is one of the women who paved the way for Ellis. Gates was the first Black woman to be promoted to sergeant major in the Mississippi National Guard in 2012.

Ellis said she is looking forward to serving in the position of sergeant major of the 210th Finance Battalion.

"I am excited to join the ranks with my fellow sergeants major," said Ellis. "I will not and do not take this promotion, position, nor opportunity for granted. Many only imagine making it to this level."

MAJ. GEN. JANSON D. BOYLES PRESENTED U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS DE FLEURY MEDAL

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

Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles, the adjutant general of Mississippi, was awarded the Silver Order of the de Fleury Medal by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) May 15, 2021. The de Fleury Medal is the most prestigious award a member of the USACE can receive. It is reserved to honor those exemplary individuals who have provided significant contributions to Army Engineering.

The medal is awarded in three different levels: Bronze, Silver, and Gold. The Silver Medal is awarded to an individual who has rendered outstanding and significant support or service to the Engineer Regiment and is reserved for presentation to only a few Soldiers every year.

Boyles was presented the Silver Order by Maj. Gen. John Trent Kelly, assistant adjutant general - Army, Mississippi National Guard.

"I'm very proud to have presented the Silver Order to Maj. Gen. Boyles. It's long overdue and well-deserved," said Kelly. "He strives to not only make the state of Mississippi a better place, but also the environment for our Mississippi National Guard Soldiers and Airmen."

Boyles' dedicated service includes serving as the deputy commander of the 168th Engineer Brigade during Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and Operation Enduring Freedom in 2008.

He also served as the commander of the 184th Expeditionary Sustainment Command in 2012 and was assigned as Chief of Staff, Headquarters Kosovo Forces in 2015.



Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles, the adjutant general of Mississippi, is presented the Silver Order of the de Fleury medal by Maj. Gen. Trent Kelly, assistant adjutant general - Army, Mississippi National Guard, during the National Guard Association of Mississippi Officer's State Conference in Flowood, Mississippi, May 15, 2021. (Courtesy photo)

"I am truly humbled and honored to receive the Silver de Fleury. It is especially meaningful having been nominated by men and women in the Engineer Corps who I have worked with for over 30+ years," said Boyles. "They are all heroes in my eyes for the sacrifices they have made and for the example they have been for me."

In his current position as the state's adjutant general, Boyles is responsible for providing Mississippi and the U.S. with a ready force of more than 12,500 Citizen Soldiers and Airmen, ensuring they are ready, equipped, and trained to respond to any natural disaster or contingency operation.



Mississippi National Guard engineer officers attend the National Guard Association of Mississippi Officer's State Conference in Flowood, Mississippi, May 15, 2021. (Courtesy photo)

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lot of talents individually, but with any unit, pulling the wagon together is what equals success.”

Class 34 earned senior status after many months of hard work and training. The candidates traded in their black hats for sky blue ones, which was the official transition from junior candidate to senior candidate. The candidates were also awarded a guidon streamer and blue ascots. The blue was proudly worn as these can-

didates marched towards their final annual training and graduation.

The remaining 38 candidates knew how to work together in order to be successful. The OCS program forged friendships and partnerships that are still intact today.

The graduates of OCS Class 34 set a high standard for future OCS classes to achieve. Col. Rick Weaver, Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center post commander said “Always remember that it is about the team, never about one individual.”



Col. Reid, a training, advising, and counseling officer for Class 34, watches Junior Candidate Weaver during training.



MSNG FAMILY PROGRAMS PRESENTS AWARDS TO VOLUNTEERS, FAMILIES

The Mississippi National Guard Family Programs team held an awards ceremony to honor volunteers and families for their astounding contributions and dedication. The awards ceremony was held at Joint Force Headquarters in Jackson, Mississippi, April 30, 2021. All of the awards were presented by Maj. Gen. Trent Kelly, assistant adjutant general - Army, Mississippi National Guard. (U.S. National Guard photo by Justin Dixon)



SUPER TALK

Michela Haggerty (right), Child and Youth Program Coordinator for the Mississippi National Guard, and Madison Smith, Child and Youth Program Specialist, were interviewed by SuperTalk Mississippi radio host Gerard Gibert, April 16, 2021. During their segment, Haggerty and Smith discussed the importance of recognizing the Month of the Military Child, observed in April, highlighting the role of military children in the armed forces community. (U.S. National Guard photo by Justin Dixon)

USO REOPENS AT CAMP SHELBY JOINT FORCES TRAINING CENTER



(From left to right) Command Sgt. Maj. Silvester Tatum, senior enlisted leader; John Prine, Special Projects Officer; Command Sgt. Maj. Gary Graham, post command sergeant major of Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center; Toby Barker, mayor of Hattiesburg; Col. Rick Weaver, post commander of CSJFTC; Felice Kelly Gillum, executive director of USO Southeast; Aaron O'Connor, manager of the USO, Missy McGee, representative of District 102; Philip Gunn, speaker of the Mississippi House of Representatives; and Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles, adjutant general of Mississippi. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. D'Markus Burrell)

Story by Tech Sgt. D'Markus Burrell
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office

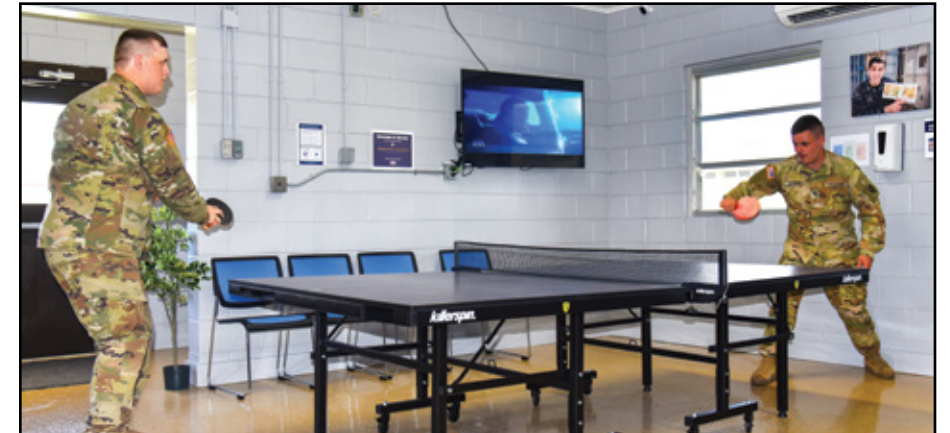
The Mississippi National Guard and Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center are happy to welcome the first United Service Organization (USO) on post since World War II.

At the USO, servicemen and women have access to an assortment of amenities including computers, televisions, video game systems, table tennis and a basketball arcade game. Snacks and drinks are also available. Although the services offered are completely free, due to the USO being a non-profit organization, donations are accepted.

“The USO provides programs, entertainment and services at more than 250 locations worldwide, including Afghanistan, Djibouti, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Germany, Italy, Japan, Iraq, South Korea and the United States,” said Felice Kelly Gillum, USO Executive Director – Gulfport, Mississippi.

The Camp Shelby facility will be open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekends.

Col. Rick Weaver, post commander of Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, had the honor of cutting the ribbon and welcoming visitors from all branches of service and retirees.



Two Soldiers playing ping-pong in the newly opened USO at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, Mississippi, May 28, 2021. The last USO at Camp Shelby closed down in 1946 after the end of World War II. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. D'Markus Burrell)

“We are very excited and proud to have the USO as a member of Team Shelby. This gives the service members who train at Camp Shelby a small break from the mental and physical challenges of training,” said Weaver. “The opportunity to partner with such an



historic and patriotic organization, while they provide the programs, entertainment and services to all service members that enter our gates, is amazing. This is truly a humbling experience to have the USO on Camp Shelby again.” The last time a USO

was open on Camp Shelby was in 1946. The USO is manned entirely by volunteers. If you would like to volunteer, you can apply for the position at USO.org.

“We are extremely grateful to the leadership at Camp Shelby for providing a platform for the USO to assist our service members while they are in the Hattiesburg area,” Gillum said. “Camp Shelby is the cornerstone of this community and one of the greatest resources in Mississippi. It is an honor for the USO to be a part of such an amazing team.”

MSNG G4 TEAM DRIVES THE TRAIN



Soldiers of the Mississippi Army National Guard Maneuver Area Training Equipment Site, load M1A2 Abrams tanks onto rail cars at the Marine Corps Logistics Base Yermo Annex, California, June 20, 2021. The MATES rail teams are scheduled to load nearly 1,000 vehicles at Yermo for transportation back to their home states following a National Training Center rotation at Fort Irwin, California. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Benjamin Tomlinson)

Story by Staff Sgt. Connie Jones
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office

In order to keep things rolling for the 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team's (ABCT) 2021 National Training Center (NTC) rotation, the Mississippi Army National Guard (MSARNG) G4 directorate operates and oversees combined logistics supporting the exercise.

"Our mission is to support multifunctional logistics for the 155th ABCT at an echelon above brigade, whether it be maintenance, transportation or supply," said Col. Bobby M. Ginn, Jr., MSARNG deputy chief of staff for logistics (G4). "My primary responsibility is command logistics to support the warfighter as they accomplish their mission, whether in times of peace, natural disaster, or war."

The job of the G4 directorate's NTC team, consisting of more than 200 Soldiers, began

over a year before the actual exercise. Planning, staging and executing the movement of personnel, equipment and vehicles from multiple states took significant work by the state's largest staff directorate.

"Early on, the transportation piece is huge. My staff are monitoring status of flights from Mississippi to California, ensuring over 3,500 Soldiers are boarding the correct ground transportation at both locations and tracking the movement of baggage trucks from March Air Reserve base to Fort Irwin," said Ginn.

The MSARNG required a total of six trains, consisting of 380 rail cars, and 111 commercial line-haul trucks to transport mission essential equipment and vehicles from Mississippi to California. Ginn and his team also monitored air, ground and rail movements of enablers and supporting elements from nine other states for the exercise.

Once at NTC, the group continued to

track vehicles on ground and managed the delivery of over 438,000 gallons of ground fuel to support the brigade, while providing accurate readiness rates to the adjutant general, chief of staff and brigade commander. Meanwhile, the surface maintenance team enabled the brigade to quickly order repair parts and make field repairs.

Ginn, former commander of Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, near Hattiesburg, is a career logistician and no stranger to making logistics happen on the battlefield.

"I've been the G4 for about seven months. I grew up in the maintenance arena, took time out for about three years to command Camp Shelby. Now I'm back in logistics where my roots come from," he said.

Ginn says he couldn't do this without his team of professional logisticians. Some of the group is fairly new to this, so the experience they gain from a large-scale training event like NTC has been invaluable for them.

The logistics mission didn't end when

Soldiers came out of the training arena at NTC, an area referred to as "The Box". From providing an accurate passenger manifest to more than 20 different commercial aircraft providers, to coordinating movement of baggage trucks, and directing bus movements at airports, the G4 NTC team worked to ensure every Soldier successfully completed their mission and safely returned home. The team coordinated the movement of nearly a thousand

wheeled and tracked vehicles, requiring assistance from over 250 Soldiers from both the 155th ABCT and Mississippi Army National Guard Maneuver Area Training Equipment Site, loading rail cars with vehicles at Camp Shelby before they left home and at Marine Corps Logistics Base Yermo Annex, California when it was time to head back.

Whether it's getting food to troops through a combination of over 157,000 meals ready to eat (MREs), six military containerized kitchen trailers and almost

50,000 commercially prepared meals, delivering electrolyte replacement drink mix in the high desert, or ensuring the right

"THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A CLICK AND A BOOM IS LOGISTICS."

-COL. BOBBY M. GINN, JR.

repairs parts are ordered, the MSARNG G4 NTC team kept things on track.

"I want to make sure everyone understands the importance of this G4 team and the magnitude of what they do. Many of the things this team does are behind the scenes; nobody really knows how that MRE got there or how that repair part arrived just in time or how that tank accurately fires 1,800 meters, but there's some logistician somewhere who's responsible for all of that," he said. "The difference between a click and a boom is logistics."



Spc. Emrys Youngberg, with the 298th Support Battalion, Mississippi Army National Guard, guides a Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck onto a rail car at the Marine Corps Logistics Base Yermo Annex, California, June 20, 2021. The 298th SB is supporting the 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, Mississippi Army National Guard, in loading nearly 1,000 vehicles at Yermo for transportation back to their home states following a National Training Center rotation at Fort Irwin, California. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Benjamin Tomlinson)



GOLD STAR FAMILIES HONORED AT THE GOVERNOR'S MANSION

Tate Reeves, Governor of Mississippi, presented the Mississippi Medal for Valor to Donna Bagwell in honor of her son, Marine Lance Corporal Marc Lucas Tucker during a Gold Star Families event at the Governor's Mansion, May 20, 2021. Cpl. Marc Lucas Tucker died serving during Operation Iraqi Freedom. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech Sgt. D'Markus Burrell)

Story by Tech Sgt. D'Markus Burrell
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office

Many families gathered at the Governor's Mansion in Jackson for a very special occasion May 20, 2021. Distinguished guests, including Gov. Tate Reeves and the current and past adjutants general of the state were in attendance. But the true stars of the evening were the Gold Star Families.

These families are the immediate relatives of military servicemen and women who died while serving our nation in a time of conflict. This event was created to shine a light on a certain star and present a past-due honor to someone who is more than deserving.

Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Marc Lucas Tucker, of Pontotoc, was serving in Iraq on June 8, 2005, when the vehicle he was in rolled over after hitting a crater caused by an improvised explosive device. He lost his life as a result of his injuries sustained during the incident.

Tucker was posthumously promoted to the rank of corporal. During his funeral, Cpl. Tucker was also awarded the Mississippi Medal for Valor by Marine Maj. John Harding of Boston, Massachusetts.

The Mississippi Medal for Valor is awarded posthumously to those who paid the ultimate sacrifice while in active service of the United States, according to Mississippi Code Title 33. Unfortunately, Tucker's family never received the



(From left) Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Augustus L. Collins, Maj. Gen. (Ret.) William L. Freeman, Donna Bagwell, Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Harold A. Cross, and Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles, adjutant general of Mississippi, pose for a picture after the Gold Star Families event at the Governor's Mansion, May 20, 2021. Gold Star Families are the loved ones of servicemen and women who have died in the line of duty. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech Sgt. D'Markus Burrell)

actual medal after his passing in 2005.

Reeves presented Tucker's mother, Donna Bagwell, accompanied by her husband, daughter, and grandson, with the Medal for Valor during the Gold Star Families event.

"We are honored to host Gold Star families, especially to present this medal to Mrs. Bagwell to pay homage to her son," said George Cain, Survivor Outreach Services Coordinator for Mississippi.

On a day where the families must

think about the passing of their loved ones, the Gold Star families in attendance were able to smile in satisfaction knowing their family members died fighting for what they believed in.

"We appreciate Gov. Reeves for opening his mansion for the board of directors of the Trail of Honor, former adjutants general of Mississippi, Gold Star families and special sponsors of this event, which will be held again in 2022," Cain said.



MEMORIAL DAY

Story by Tech Sgt. D'Markus Burrell
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office

Visitors from around the state gathered at the Mississippi Armed Forces Museum at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center to remember those who paid the ultimate sacrifice, commemorating one man in particular, U.S. Navy Hospital Apprentice First Class James Howell Grantham.

Speaker of the House Philip Gunn was the keynote speaker and Grantham's great nephew, Eddie Bufkin, read some of Grantham's letters home and spoke about his military service.

Grantham, a Lucedale native, was a hospital apprentice (corpsman) during his time in service. He attended Mississippi Normal College, which is now the University of Southern Mississippi, before he decided to volunteer for the Navy during World War I, where he was attached to the 94th Company, 6th Regiment (Marines), 2d Division. Bufkin told stories of how Grantham was not a fan of being on the water but read letters of how he kept his spirits high while traveling the sea.

Grantham and his company were in France for the Meuse-Argonne offensive. In one of the deadliest battles in American history, he was doing his best to care for his fellow servicemen.

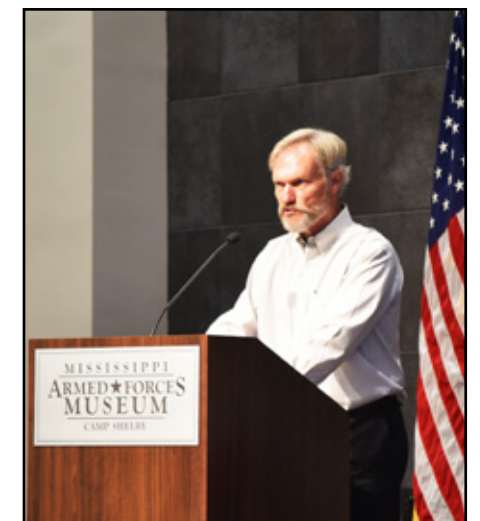
On November 1, 1918, Grantham bravely went out against enemy fire to attend to the wounded when he was struck. Grantham was killed while bandaging one of his wounded comrades just 10 days before the end of the war. He was the last WWI recipient of the Navy Cross, the Navy's second-highest decoration for valor in combat.

"It's imperative that we honor those like Howell Grantham who gave the ultimate sacrifice doing something so honorable. Today, we have only shown a fraction of our appreciation," Bufkin said.

Bufkin and the rest of Grantham's family in attendance were given a United States flag from U.S. Congressman Steven Palazzo and his team.

After the conclusion of the event, everyone in attendance gathered around the Gold Star Family Memorial where a wreath was placed in memory of Howell Grantham.

(From left to right) Philip Gunn, speaker of the House of Representatives, Eddie Bufkin, great nephew of Hospital Apprentice First Class Howell Grantham, and Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles, adjutant general of the Mississippi National Guard, outside of the Gold Star Family Memorial Monument at the Mississippi Armed Forces Museum, May 28, 2021. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech Sgt. D'Markus Burrell)

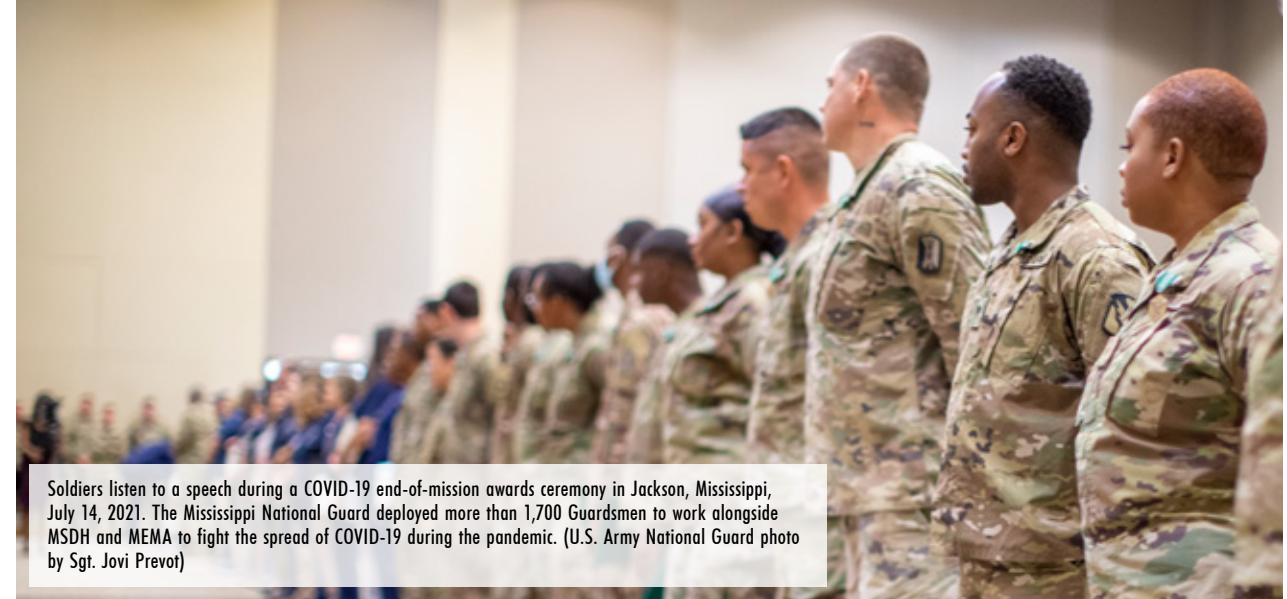


Eddie Bufkin, great nephew of Hospital Apprentice First Class Howell Grantham, speaks to the audience about the great sacrifice of his uncle during the Memorial Day event at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, May 28, 2021. Grantham lost his life tending to the wounds of his comrades during World War I. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech Sgt. D'Markus Burrell)

COVID RESPONSE MISSION



U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Qadry Burrage, an aerospace medical service specialist assigned to the 186th Air Refueling Wing, Mississippi Air National Guard, prepares to administer a COVID-19 test at the Oktibbeha County Safe Room in Starkville, Mississippi, May 28, 2020. The Mississippi National Guard supported the Mississippi Department of Health at testing sites throughout the state as part of the governor's COVID-19 State Task Force. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Jovi Prevot)



Soldiers listen to a speech during a COVID-19 end-of-mission awards ceremony in Jackson, Mississippi, July 14, 2021. The Mississippi National Guard deployed more than 1,700 Guardsmen to work alongside MSDH and MEMA to fight the spread of COVID-19 during the pandemic. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Jovi Prevot)

Story by Tech Sgt. D'Markus Burrell
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office

In March 2020, Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves enacted a state of emergency requesting federal assistance to help fight COVID-19. Since then, more than 1,700 Mississippi National Guardsmen have been activated and tasked with supporting the mission in every way possible.

"We've done everything from performing tests and providing the vaccine, to fulfilling the logistics of transporting the materials all over the state," said Col. Kendrick Cager, commander of the MSNG COVID-19 Task Force.

At the onset of the pandemic, Guardsmen were tasked solely with testing citizens and providing the logistics behind it. The testing teams started as traveling teams setting up at various sites throughout the state but, due to necessity, some teams were re-assigned to set up static sites at locations like the Old Farmers Market in Jackson.

More than 226,000 citizens were tested in the combined effort of the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, led by the Mississippi Department of Health and supported by Mississippi Emergency Management Agency and MSNG. As the vaccine became available, the focus switched from testing for the virus to administering shots.

The demand for the vaccines was high in the beginning, with many sites vaccinating approximately 1,000 people or more each day. According to Cager, a couple of the busiest sites were the Hattiesburg Convention Center and Trustmark Park in Pearl.

Since the peak, the numbers have

gone down tremendously. "When we first started, we were doing thousands as far as the numbers are concerned, and now we're barely doing a hundred on a weekly basis," said Staff Sgt. Cimmarian Knighton, serving with the Madison County vaccination team.

"The main takeaway from this whole mission of COVID-19 response has been that we're an adaptable organization and that we're capable," said Cager. "Our Soldiers and Airmen are capable of executing any mission that they're given. No matter what the future holds, we stand ready to support the citizens of Mississippi."



Gov. Tate Reeves and Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles, the adjutant general of Mississippi, pin awards on Mississippi Guardsmen and women during a COVID-19 end-of-mission awards ceremony at Gulfport Combat Readiness Training Center in Gulfport, Miss., July 14, 2021. The Mississippi National Guard deployed more than 1,700 Guardsmen to work alongside MSDH and MEMA to fight the spread of COVID-19 during the pandemic. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. D'Markus Burrell)

"WE'VE DONE EVERYTHING FROM PERFORMING TESTS AND PROVIDING THE VACCINE, TO FULFILLING THE LOGISTICS OF TRANSPORTING THE MATERIALS ALL OVER THE STATE"

-COL. KENDRICK CAGER



Spc. Jasmine Walk, a combat medic specialist assigned to Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, Mississippi Army National Guard, prepares to administer a COVID-19 vaccine at the Leflore County Health Department in Greenwood, Mississippi, January 7, 2021. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Jovi Prevot)

Mississippi Army National Guard Warrant Officer of the Year



Chief Warrant Officer 2 Billy Poe (left) receives the 2021 Warrant Officer of the Year award from Chief Warrant Officer 5 Thomas Smith, command chief warrant officer of the Mississippi Army National Guard, during the National Guard Association of Mississippi state conference in May 2021. (U.S. National Guard photo by Justin Dixon)

U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Billy Poe was selected as the Mississippi Army National Guard's 2021 Warrant Officer of the Year. Poe currently serves as a Human Resources Technician for the Headquarters Company, 185th Aviation Regiment in Jackson.

Army Warrant Officers serve a special role within their branch as they represent less than three percent of the Army's total strength. Those selected for this position are considered highly-trained technical experts in their fields. They also carry the responsibilities of training Soldiers, organizing and advising on missions, and serving as the Army's technician experts and trusted advisors.

"The Warrant Officer's role in the Army is ever-changing and evolving," said Chief Warrant Officer 5 Thomas Smith, command chief warrant officer of the Mississippi National Guard. "We are technical officers who provide quality leadership to teams, sections, and crews. We are unique, and often serve as influential agents of change in our respective fields."

Smith said that Poe was chosen as Warrant of the Year for not only his exceptional work ethic, but his dedication to caring for those around him.

"Mr. Poe was selected as the 2021 Warrant Officer of the Year because of his exceptional performance in caring for the most valuable asset we have, our people," said Smith. "He is one of our hardest working Human Resource Technicians in one of our most complex and technical formations. He has earned this recognition and will continue to lead in the Human Resources enterprise."

Poe is thankful for the recognition but attributes the award to the hard work of his team.

"Receiving the Warrant Officer of the Year Award was an exciting and rewarding recognition not only for myself but also the team I work with on a daily basis," Poe said. "They were the ones that earned it. Between them and the command group that supports our endeavors, one could not ask for a more rewarding job."

RETIREE DAY

Tuesday, November 9, 2021
10 am - 1 pm

Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center
Mississippi Armed Forces Museum

Contact the MSNG Public Affairs Office:

ng.ms.msarng.list.public-affairs@mail.mil

601.313.6349
601.313.6187



MS National Guard
Outreach Services



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The Mississippi National Guard's one-stop-shop for information and resources supporting our service members and their Families.

Lending a helping hand to assist
Mississippi National Guard Service
Members and their Families.

OUTREACH SERVICES PROGRAMS AND MORE



Suicide Prevention

Suicide Prevention is an integral component of the Army's Ready and Resilient Campaign (R2C).



Family Programs

This program helps families cope with the strains associated with unit deployments and state emergencies and offers necessary assistance from military and civilian resources.



Resources

Family Assistance, Education, Employment Outreach, Yellow Ribbon, Chaplain's Corner, Human Resources, and more.



SARC / SHARP

Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, Victim Advocate Coordinator, MS Coalition Against Sexual Assault and more.



Education

Federal Tuition Assistance, State Education Assistance Program, GI Bill and Transfer of Education Benefits, and Incentives.



G-1 Promotion Lists

Enlisted MSNG members may check their eligibility for promotion on the Outreach Services app.

HOW IT WORKS

This App provides a variety of resources to assist Leaders at all levels with a quick reference guide to resources, military benefits, and immediate assistance for concerns. The app is a one-stop-shop for Resources and also a great tool for Families to check upcoming MSNG Child and Youth events.



For Android
Google Play



ms.ng.mil

For Apple
App Store



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

Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment, Wyoming Army National Guard, advance to an objective during a training exercise at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, California, June 12, 2021. The 1-297th's participation in the NTC rotation allows the 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, Mississippi Army National Guard, and supporting units to build teamwork and maintain combat readiness for future missions. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Cadet Jarvis Mace)

