

# GUARD



Winter 2015

# DETAIL

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ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD

## Southern Strike 15 storms the Gulf Coast





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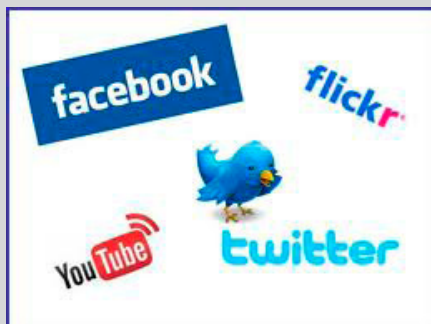
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**FRONT COVER:** U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Barry Loo, 1st Combat Camera Squadron aerial combat photojournalist, documents offensive counter-air training onboard an F-15D Eagle during Exercise Southern Strike 15 near Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans Nov. 4. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Barry Loo) Inset, Joint Terminal Attack Controllers from the 238th Air Support Operations Squadron (ASOS), Mississippi Air National Guard; 122nd ASOS, Louisiana Air National Guard; and 147th ASOS, Texas Air National Guard, direct an AC-130 Spectre for an air-to-ground mission at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center on Nov. 4. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Melissa Goslin, 1st Combat Camera Squadron)

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# From the Editor

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

## 2015 - A Year of Challenge

**“Whether we want them or not,  
the New Year will bring new challenges;  
whether we seize them or not,  
the New Year will bring new opportunities.”**  
*Michael Josephson*

Another new year is upon us and for many in the Mississippi National Guard, it will be business as usual -- working our daily jobs, supporting our families, attending Guard drills, just making ends meet. Nothing new seems to be on the horizon. We've made the same old resolutions, but in time they begin to fade with the complexities of life. Someone once said, "Good resolutions are simply checks that men/women draw of a bank where they have no account."

We don't need resolutions as a guide to do things different or better in the New Year. We know what to do. We just need to focus our efforts on doing it better.

Let's start with the family, the folks that depend on you as the father, mother and provider. Whether it is a spouse, children, brothers, sisters, or parents, someone is depending on you as a sound figure, a leader in the home. We have our jobs and all the stress that goes with them, but to our children or other family members, we are all they have in many instances. Let us not forget this.

Employers hired us to do a particular job, so accept the challenge to do that job better. Get to work 15 minutes earlier each day, it will give you time to settle in, greet your fellow workers, and who knows, it might be an example for someone else to follow. Regardless of your job, someone is always looking up to you.

Be passionate in everything you do this year. When we face our daily grind with passion, the problems we encounter along the way don't seem nearly as important. And we deal with things in a much better frame of mind. The way we react to difficulty and stress affects all those around us, especially our families.

In the Old Testament, Nehemiah was allowed to leave with his fellow captives in Babylonia to restore the walls and gates of Jerusalem. Preceded by Ezra and 42,000 Jews, who rebuilt the temple, Nehemiah's love of his country and his fellow Jews was paramount in his decision to approach the Persian king for permission to rebuild what had been destroyed 140 years earlier. Persia was a pagan nation, but the king granted Nehemiah permission, and he also gave him funding to do so. We know who was at work here!

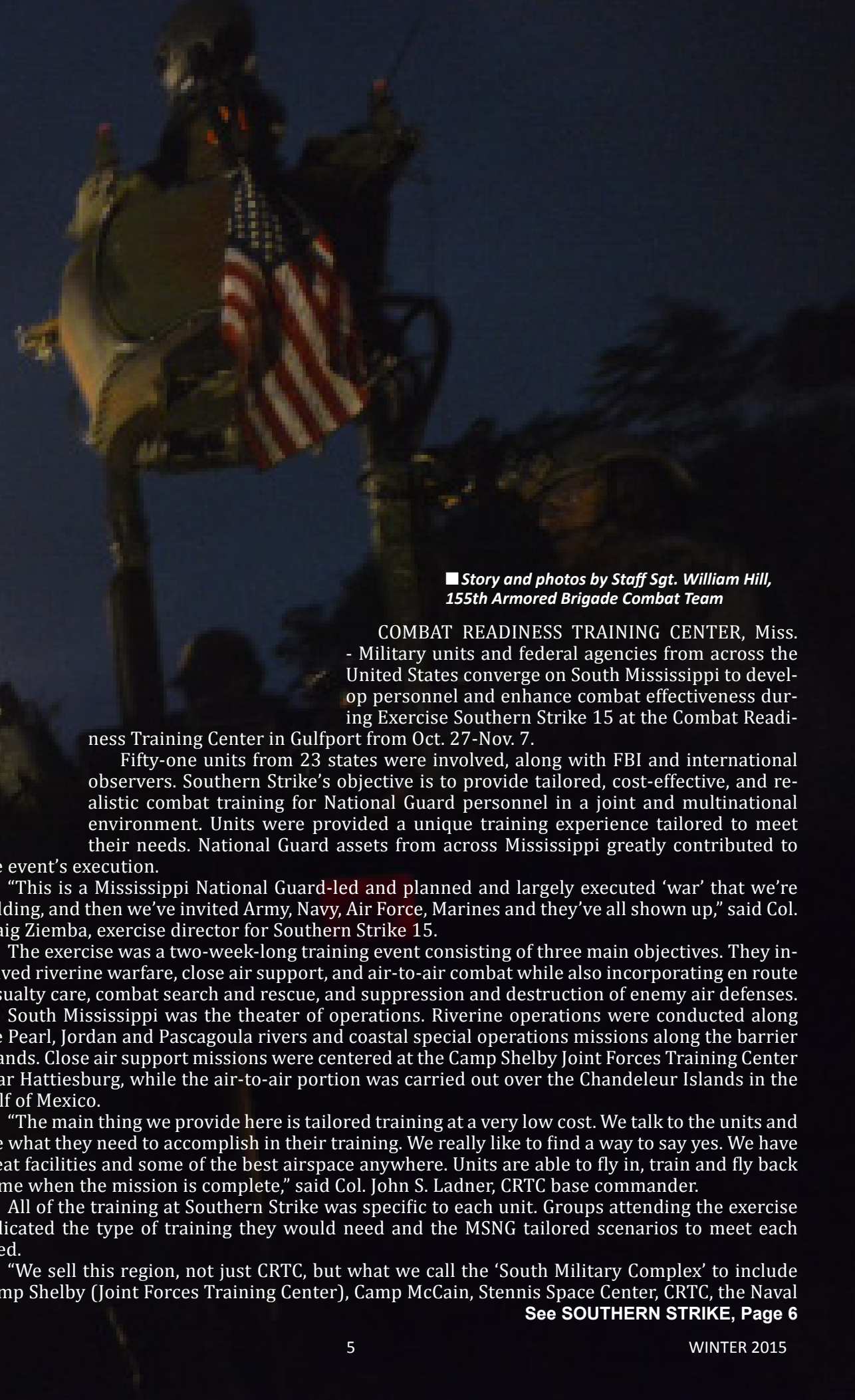
Let's use passion like Nehemiah's in this coming New Year. Our rewards will be great!  
Until next time.....



# Southern Strike 15 storms the Gulf Coast



*U.S. Army National Guard soldiers with the 2nd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group, of Jackson, conduct a nighttime assault mission Nov. 6 at Stennis Space Center as part of Exercise Southern Strike 15. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Airman Christopher Muncy, New York Air National Guard Public Affairs)*



■ *Story and photos by Staff Sgt. William Hill,  
155th Armored Brigade Combat Team*

COMBAT READINESS TRAINING CENTER, Miss. - Military units and federal agencies from across the United States converge on South Mississippi to develop personnel and enhance combat effectiveness during Exercise Southern Strike 15 at the Combat Readiness Training Center in Gulfport from Oct. 27-Nov. 7.

Fifty-one units from 23 states were involved, along with FBI and international observers. Southern Strike's objective is to provide tailored, cost-effective, and realistic combat training for National Guard personnel in a joint and multinational environment. Units were provided a unique training experience tailored to meet their needs. National Guard assets from across Mississippi greatly contributed to the event's execution.

"This is a Mississippi National Guard-led and planned and largely executed 'war' that we're holding, and then we've invited Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and they've all shown up," said Col. Craig Ziemba, exercise director for Southern Strike 15.

The exercise was a two-week-long training event consisting of three main objectives. They involved riverine warfare, close air support, and air-to-air combat while also incorporating en route casualty care, combat search and rescue, and suppression and destruction of enemy air defenses.

South Mississippi was the theater of operations. Riverine operations were conducted along the Pearl, Jordan and Pascagoula rivers and coastal special operations missions along the barrier islands. Close air support missions were centered at the Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center near Hattiesburg, while the air-to-air portion was carried out over the Chandeleur Islands in the Gulf of Mexico.

"The main thing we provide here is tailored training at a very low cost. We talk to the units and see what they need to accomplish in their training. We really like to find a way to say yes. We have great facilities and some of the best airspace anywhere. Units are able to fly in, train and fly back home when the mission is complete," said Col. John S. Ladner, CRTC base commander.

All of the training at Southern Strike was specific to each unit. Groups attending the exercise indicated the type of training they would need and the MSNG tailored scenarios to meet each need.

"We sell this region, not just CRTC, but what we call the 'South Military Complex' to include Camp Shelby (Joint Forces Training Center), Camp McCain, Stennis Space Center, CRTC, the Naval

**See SOUTHERN STRIKE, Page 6**





A HC-130 Hercules from the 165th Air Wing, based at Savannah Air National Guard Base, Ga., prepares to land on Auxiliary 1 during Exercise Southern Strike 15 at the Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center on Nov. 3. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Melissa Goslin, 1st Combat Camera Squadron)

## SOUTHERN STRIKE

Continued from Page 5

Construction Battalion Center, and Keesler Air Force Base. When you put all that together, and add our airspace and water, it's phenomenal what we can do here," Ladner said.

An additional area of emphasis was the Crisis Response Element, which demonstrated for the first time the MSNG's ability to use solely organic assets to deliver and deploy a specialized special operations force. A C-17 aircraft from Flowood's 172nd Airlift Wing transported tactical watercraft from Stennis Space Center to the Gulfport CRTC with in-flight refueling from a Meridian-based KC-135 simulating world travel. The watercraft were then airlifted to the Mississippi River by CH-47 Chinook helicopters with Mississippi Army National Guard AH-64 Apache gunships from the 185th Aviation Brigade providing support. The MSNG also provided intelligence reconnaissance and surveillance (ISR) with RC-26 and UH-72 aircraft.

The Crisis Response Element demonstrated the ability of the Mississippi National Guard to "rapidly pick up and move a special operations top tier team anywhere in the world," Ziemba said.

Southern Strike, in its third year, has grown each cycle and has proven to be an invaluable training asset to active duty and well as National Guard units.

This cost-effective training utilizes the CRTC to lodge and feed troops. It allows commanders more fiscal flexibility to ensure strong training for the price. The experience is unique because it provides multiple units opportunities to train together in a real-world environment. Southern Strike 15 demonstrates the role the state of Mississippi continues to play in maintaining military readiness for future missions both stateside and abroad.



Pennsylvania Air National Guard Tech. Sgt. Bill Paull, a boom operator assigned to the 171st Aerial Refueling Wing from Pittsburgh, refuels a U.S. Air Force F-15E Strike Eagle from a KC-135 Stratotanker during exercise Southern Strike 15 near the Combat Readiness Training Center in Gulfport on Oct. 28. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Barry Loo, 1st Combat Camera Squadron)



Above, A 43rd Fighter Squadron F-22 prepares to refuel beneath a 171st Air Refueling Wing KC-135 over Gulfport on Nov. 4 as part of Exercise Southern Strike 15. (New York Air National Guard photo by Senior Airman Christopher Muncy, New York Air National Guard Public Affairs) Below left, North Carolina Air National Guard Senior Airman Doretha McLaughlin of the 153rd Aeromedical Squadron provides care to a simulated wounded patient by using a respiration device on a C-17 Globemaster III flown by the Mississippi Air National Guard's 183rd Airlift Squadron while in flight over the Combat Readiness Training Center in Gulfport. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Gregory Brook, 1st Combat Camera Squadron) Below right, U.S. Army National Guard Soldiers with the 154th Regional Training Institute engage targets with mortar teams during training at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center firing range on Nov. 5. Targets were assigned by Joint Terminal Attack Controller units from several states. (New York Air National Guard photo by Senior Airman Christopher Muncy, New York Air National Guard Public Affairs)





# Black Ravens draw units from across U.S. for Gulf Coast exercise

■ Story by Staff Sgt. William Hill  
155th Armored Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

COMBAT READINESS TRAINING CENTER, Gulfport - Naval Electronic Attack Squadron VAQ-135 maintains the friendly skies from the Puget Sound to the Gulf of Mexico. The E/A-18G Growler unit from Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Oak Harbor, Wash., was a pivotal component in the success of Exercise Southern Strike 15 at the Combat Readiness Training Center in Gulfport from Oct. 27-Nov. 7.

The squadron's mission is to "provide fully operational EA-18G aircraft to perform unrestricted electronic attack as needed throughout the world," according to their website.

It is one of the most advanced planes in the world and an integral part of United States air power. The Navy is the only U.S. military branch to offer the Growler platform.

"The Growlers provide virtually all of the tactical electronic jamming that the military has. When it comes to jamming ... that's the specialty of the Growler. That's why our fighters want to train flying with them and against them," said Col. Craig Ziemba, Southern Strike 15 exercise director.

Ziemba said the Growler was a major incentive for many of the units who attended the exercise because it is rare they have the opportunity to train with and against the electronic attack platforms.

"We chose to come here because it's a good combination of low cost training and also effective training for what we need for our readiness," said Lt. Jason

Smith, VAQ-135 pilot. "We need to be able to integrate with different units that we could see in the combat situation. We're able to link up with other units around the area and train over the Gulf. Southern Strike also offers us a unique opportunity to train with Army and National Guard units as well. It brings everybody together at one centralized location."

The squadron regularly trains at the Red Flag Exercise at Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada. Smith, a Dallas native, said that the scenarios at Nellis are similar to the training here, but on a larger scale. The smaller amount of units here offers the ability to customize training and experience situations that they don't normally see. The ability to run a mission with a special operations team on the ground and helicopters in the air was something that Smith had not experienced.

This is the second trip to South Mississippi for the "Black Ravens." They also participated in Southern Strike 14. Key differences in the two exercises were the weather and the number of units participating, said Smith. The quick response and willingness to accommodate training, both logistical and tactical, were factors that help to enhance the experience at CRTC.

"We have a great opportunity for joint training because we have so many different units that are able to train here," said Col. John S. Ladner, CRTC base commander. "We have the South Training Complex, which includes CRTC and other training areas. When we add to those the airspace and water it's phenomenal what we have to offer."

*A Navy EA-18G Growler with Electronic Attack Squadron VAQ-135 "Black Ravens" sits on the flight line during sunset at the Combat Readiness Training Center in Gulfport on Oct. 30. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. William Hill, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs)*



*A U.S. Navy air wing maintenance member from VAQ-135 "Black Ravens," Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Oak Harbor, Wash., monitors the plane captains' start of the engines on EA-18G Growlers prior to launch at the Combat Readiness Training Center flight line in Gulfport while participating in Exercise Southern Strike 15 Oct. 30. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Gregory Brook, 1st Combat Camera Squadron)*



*U.S. Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Malava Adelle, left, and Petty Officer 3rd Class Corey Malinowski, right, Electronic Attack Squadron 135, aviation ordnancemen, inspect a missile during Southern Strike 15 at the Combat Readiness Training Center in Gulfport on Oct 29. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Alexandra Minor, 1st Combat Camera Squadron)*



# Seeking Shelter

## Soldier survives armory destruction

■ Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Michael Williams JFH-MS Public Affairs

COLUMBIA, Miss.— High winds threatened the life of Sgt. 1st Class Donald Harrod Dec. 23 as he scrambled to find shelter in the unit's disintegrating Columbia armory when a tornado descended on the small Mississippi town. Fortunately, he emerged unscathed.

Harrod, Charlie Company 155th Brigade Special Troops Battalion readiness noncommissioned officer, sought protection in several locations inside the armory to stay alive.

"By the time I was turning into the parking lot at the armory, the sirens started to go off," said Harrod. "I noticed debris starting to fly around."

Harrod found himself scrambling for cover as the tornado bore down on him. He says he sought protection in one location, but kept moving as the damage intensified.

"I ducked into the motor pool facility and the building started to come apart," said Harrod. "So then I



Sgt. 1st Class Donald Harrod, Charlie Company, 155th Special Troops Battalion, stands in his office after the storm among some of the debris that littered the armory floor.

moved to the drill hall and as soon as I got inside the roof came off.

"I eventually moved to the male latrine and stayed there throughout the tornado," he said.

As he moved throughout the unstable infrastructure, Harrod said, it sounded like mortar rounds hitting the side of the building.

"It happened really quick; and once it was over I kind of thought to myself about what just happened," said the Hattiesburg resident. "I'm just happy that I made it through."

The EF3 tornado claimed the lives of three people in Marion County. The tornado damaged businesses, flipped cars and toppled power lines along U.S. Highway 98 as it closed roads for several hours.

"I know there were some that didn't make it and our hearts go out to their families," said Harrod.

According to the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency, more than 215 homes were damaged, including 90 that were destroyed. The storm also destroyed 44 storefronts and damaged another

er 33.

On Dec. 24, despite it being the day before Christmas, other Mississippi Army National Guard Soldiers from the 106th Support Battalion, headquartered in Monticello, came to lend a helping hand to their fellow Guardsmen in need.

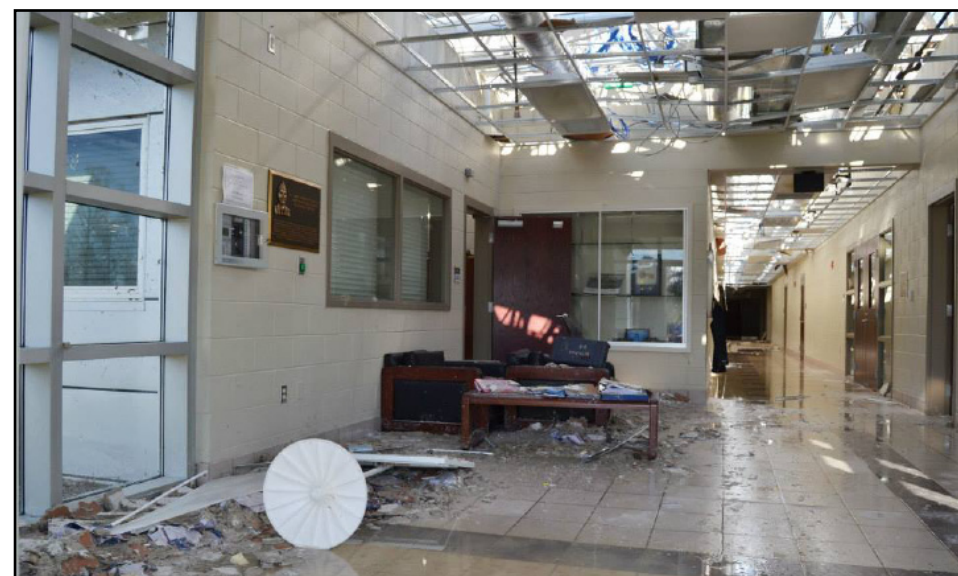
The future of the Columbia armory, which was built in 2007 after the previous facility was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina, remains uncertain. It suffered heavy roof and water damage and will either need major repairs or to be rebuilt. Regardless, it will be about 12-18 months before Soldiers are able to occupy and conduct training at the facility, said Lt. Col. Timothy Powell, MSNG director of public affairs.

In the meantime, he said, the armory's staff and equipment have been transferred to Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center.

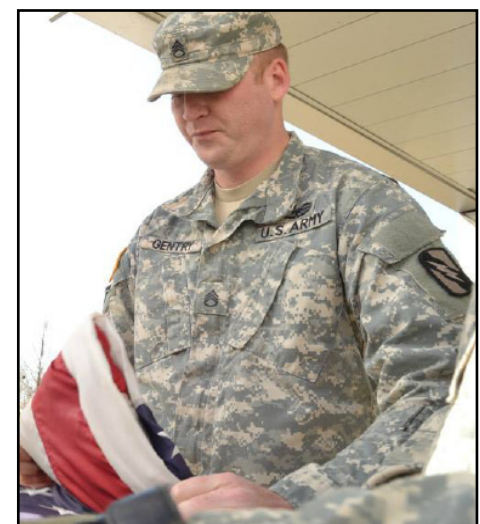
"I'm just glad to be here for my family and that everyone's safe," said Harrod.



Mississippi Army National Guard Soldiers from 155th Special Troops Battalion and 106th Support Battalion help clean up debris and load boxes at the armory after the tornado. Nearly 40 Soldiers participated in the clean up efforts on Christmas Eve.



The entrance of the Charlie Co., 155th STB armory, located in Columbia, suffered structural damage as a tornado ripped through the area Dec. 23. Debris and nearly four inches of water was left on the floor.



Staff Sgt. Josh Gentry, Charlie Co., 155th STB, helps fold a damaged American flag Dec 24. The unit's armory suffered massive structural damage.

## MSNG Bike Ride rolls up Natchez Trace



Maj. Gen. Augustus L. Collins, the Adjutant General of Miss., leads approximately 10 Magnolia Guard cyclists on a morning ride along the Ross Barnett Reservoir portion of the Natchez Trace on Oct. 25. The Guardsmen completed routes between 20 and 40 miles. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Lt. Col. Christian Patterson, JFH-MS Public Affairs)



# 1st CAV partners with state brigade

■ Story and photos by  
Staff Sgt. Chuck Burden  
1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs

CAMP SHELBY, Miss. - In keeping with U.S. Army Forces Command Total Force Policy initiative, the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, recently visited Camp Shelby, Miss., to discuss future training events with 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, Mississippi Army National Guard.

"Our partnership with the 155th affords both organizations the opportunity to become more combat ready," said Col. Matthew Van Wagenen, commander of the 3rd BCT. "I have every confidence that we will see the difference from the individual Soldier level through collective brigade battle staffs."



Col. William Chlebowski (center), commander of the 177th BCT, Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center listens as Col. Matthew Van Wagenen, commander of the 3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. (left), explains training objectives Oct. 17 at Camp Shelby.

The two units discussed and planned joint-training events ranging from a gunnery academy to the brigades exchanging standard operating procedures.

"Our blended training concepts and joint brigade-level operations will lead to an (active-component/reserve-component) proficiency that benefits the division and total heavy force as a whole," Col. Jeffrey Van, commander of the 155th ABCT, MSARNG, said.

Soldiers from the both units are scheduled to train together at Camp Shelby during a decisive action rotation called the eXportable Combat Training Capability 15-5 next summer.

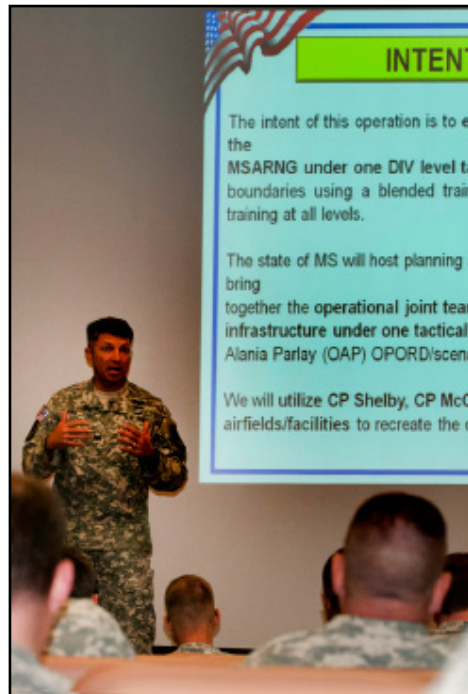
Active-duty units typically use one of two stateside training locations for higher-echelon combat training - the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., and the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, La.

The Army National Guard now has its own location for similar training - the XCTC at Camp Shelby.

3rd BCT's recent visit to Camp Shelby highlighted the brigades' efforts to expand the AC/RC partnership program and leverage opportunities to participate in Army Total Force Training.

In this year's October edition of Army Magazine, Gen. Mark Milley, the commanding general of U.S. Army Forces Command, spoke about how FORSCOM will implement Army Total Force Training.

"To accomplish our mission, FORSCOM operates as a strong, integrated total Army team-active component, Army National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve. FORSCOM incorporates a total force approach into everything we do," Milley said.



Col. Jeffrey Van, commander of the 155th ABCT, addresses attendees at the initial planning conference at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center on Oct. 17 concerning XCTC 15-5, scheduled for next year. The XCTC decisive action rotation will highlight the brigade's efforts to expand the active-component and reserve-component partnership program with the 3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. of Fort Hood.

# Key Field celebrates 75-year anniversary

Left, U.S. Air Force Maj. Ross Goodin, deputy commander of the 238th Air Support Operations Squadron, holds the microphone for Maj. Gen. Augustus Collins, the adjutant general of Mississippi, as he delivers the aircraft launch command with special guest, U.S. Air Force (Ret.) Brig. Gen. Sam Forbert, during the base's 75th anniversary ceremony at Key Field Air National Guard Base in Meridian on Sept. 6. The aircraft launch commemorated the founding of Key Field's original 153rd Observation Squadron in 1939. Below, U.S. Air Force Col. Mike Nabors, commander of the 186th Air Refueling Wing, salutes Forbert, after presenting him with a coin. Forbert was the wing commander from 1970 - 1978. (U.S. Air National Guard photos by Senior Airman Jessica Fielder)

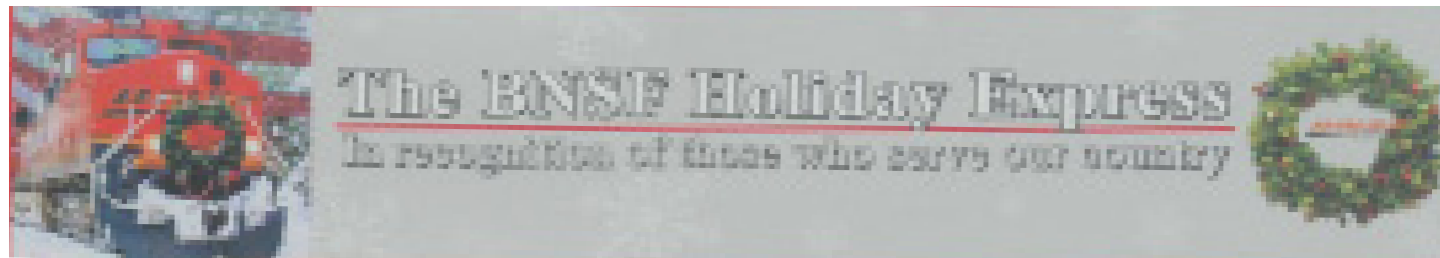


# National Guard chief visits state

Gen. Frank J. Grass, Chief of the National Guard Bureau and a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, visited the Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center near Hattiesburg and the Gulfport Combat Readiness Training Center on Oct. 22. Grass was briefed on several state-specific missions and capabilities, held a Town Hall Meeting at the Regional Training Institute at Camp Shelby and talked to Soldiers and Airmen during the day. (U.S. Army National Guard photos by Staff Sgt. Scott Tynes, JFH-MS Public Affairs)







# Holiday ride honors military

■ Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Michael Williams JFH-MS Public Affairs

AMORY — BNSF Railways paid tribute to Mississippi Army National Guard Soldiers and their families during a special two-hour holiday ride in Amory on Dec. 6.

Nearly 350 Guard Soldiers from 1st Squadron, 98th Cavalry Regiment and loved ones gathered at the train depot to ride unique vintage railroad cars that were built in the 1940's and 1950's.

BNSF, a nationwide freight transportation company, has been running its Holiday Express train for the past seven years and offers free joy rides and refreshments for military families.

"This is the seventh year of the Holiday Express train trip," said Joe Faust, BNSF Railroad director of Public Affairs. "Often these Soldiers are deployed away from their families



Nearly 350 Mississippi Army National Guard Soldiers and their families board a BNSF Railways train for a two-hour ride.

and we try to bring them together in a unique setting so they can have quality time with their family members and enjoy the holiday seasons."

Faust said the vintage cars were built in the 40's and 50's and they tried to maintain their character on what they looked like when they were originally built.

Spc. Jesse Stanley, a Bradley gunner with 1-98 said his family enjoyed the train trip and he's appreciative for what BNSF did for the military.

"My family really had a great time," said Stanley. "This is a good thing for the Soldiers and their families and I'm glad they put this on for us."

Lt. Col. Walter Vinzant, 1-98 commander, said he appreciated the company's efforts.

"Our Soldiers train really hard throughout the year and with BNSF coming out here on a December drill to put this on for us is really great for us and our families," he said.

"After talking with the Soldiers and their families, they seem to love it," Vinzant said.

BNSF also donated \$10,000 to the Mississippi Family Relief Fund and another \$10,000 to the Northeast Mississippi Chapter of the Red Cross in a ceremony after the ride.

BNSF's Holiday Express train is expected to provide rides to about 2,000 military family members during its five-day trip through Missouri, Arkansas, Tennessee, Mississippi and Alabama. In all, the BSNF Foundation will donate \$100,000 to organizations



Santa Claus provides a gift to the wife of a 1st Squadron, 98th Cavalry Squadron Soldier during a holiday ride aboard a BNSF Railways train Dec. 6.

# 172nd flies special Christmas mission

## Angel Tree children enjoy North Pole trip

■ Story and photo by Tech. Sgt. Ed Staton 172nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

FLOWOOD - With thousands of Air Evacuation missions flown to Iraq and Afghanistan for the purpose of bringing wounded U.S. military members back home since 2005, Flowood's 172d Airlift Wing has generated many smiles with the safe delivery of their special cargo.

Each December, however, this Air National Guard unit flies a secret mission that contains a much younger passenger list. And instead of looking forward to returning to the familiar sights and sounds of home, this group travels to the far corners of the earth for a once in a lifetime experience.

The annual event is known as the Trip to the North Pole. And each year, more than 60 children travel on one of the 172d's C-17 Globemaster Aircraft to that special spot so that they can meet Santa, Mrs. Claus and many of the toy-making elves. And before the enchanting evening has ended, the children magically return to Jackson with a collection of big smiles, gifts and a memory they may never forget.

"It's the biggest blessing of my year," exclaimed Mrs. Claus. The rosy-cheeked lady also known as Mary Hardy added, "It's such a gift to us to see the happiness on the children's faces."

The flight to the North Pole first took flight in 2006 and is made possible through the community minded partnership that rings strong with the combined efforts of the Salvation Army, Y-101 Radio and the 172d Airlift Wing. The children between the ages of five and seven are chosen by the Salvation Army. As the children eye their calendars for their upcoming adventure, the Y-101 team and the 172d work exhaustive hours to ensure that plenty of toys and gifts are gathered and sent to the North Pole in time for the arriving flight.

"The kids get off the plane and see



Flight to the North Pole volunteers greet 60 Salvation Army Angel Tree children and their parents as they depart a C-17 Aircraft and enter the North Pole.

**"These children will remember this for the rest of their lives and it will bring transformation to families that desperately need it."**

- Capt. Ken Chapman, Salvation Army

those elves running up to love them. It's absolutely the magical time of Christmas," said Capt. Ken Chapman of the Salvation Army. "These children will remember this for the rest of their lives and it will bring transformation to families that desperately need it."

Another interesting transformation for the event is the wardrobe change that takes place. Instead of wearing traditional Air Force flight suits and camouflaged uniforms, Santa's elves and workers know that tights, pointed shoes and floppy hats are always in style at the workshop.

"I feel complete when I'm wear-

ing a pair of tights," said Buddy the Elf. Santa's worker also sometimes referred to as Chaplain Fields added, "It means so much to kids to dance and play with an elf and I'm just the elf to do it."

Fortunately, thanks to magical pixie dust, the cost associated with the 172d's trip to the North Pole is greatly minimized. The trip takes less than 30 minutes and some passengers might swear that the plane never left the ground. Oh the magic of Christmas!

## HOLIDAY

Continued from Page 14 that offer support to military members and their families.

"The military is important to us and what we try to do is contribute some much needed funds to organizations who make a difference in the lives of this area's military," said Faust.

BNSF employs more than 7,500 veterans and they make up 17 percent of the railway's work force. It is the second largest freight railroad network in North America, operating in 28 states and three Canadian provinces.





## \$10,000 raised for Blair E. Batson

Mississippi National Guard Soldiers, Airmen and friends play the greens at Madison's beautiful Reunion Golf and Country Club on Oct. 27. The effort was to benefit the Blair E. Batson Children's Hospital in Jackson. Twenty-one teams competed in the tournament which raised \$10,000 for the hospital. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Lt. Col. Christian Patterson, Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs Office)

## 210th Finance Co. returns to state

Bryce Wade of Jackson's 210th Financial Management Company is welcomed home by Jalyn Wade on Nov. 11. The unit returned to Jackson after completing a one-year mobilization for service in Kuwait. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Lt. Col. Christian Patterson, Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs Office)



## State honors fallen Soldiers on Veterans Day

Master Sgt. Marcus Patterson salutes the War Memorial in Jackson to honor the state's fallen Soldiers during a Veterans Day Ceremony held at the War Memorial Building on Nov. 11. The keynote speaker this year was Major General Augustus L. Collins, the Adjutant General. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Tim Morgan, Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs Office)



# Fallen Soldier

## Special Forces Group remembers 2nd Lt. Anthony Scardino

■ Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Michael Williams, JFH-MS

JACKSON, Miss. -- A Mississippi Army National Guard unit paid tribute to a fallen comrade during a memorial ceremony in Jackson on Nov. 16.

Signal officer 2nd Lt. Anthony Scardino was honored during a commemorative service that was held by Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group, headquartered in Jackson.

"We wanted to honor the family today," said Sgt. 1st Class Steven Corley, 2-20 SFG Non-commissioned Officer in charge. "Everybody didn't get the chance to speak or attend the funeral so this is a way for us to say our goodbyes with the family."

"This is also a way for us to tell his family what their son meant to us and to tell them what kind of man they raised," said Corley.

Corley described Scardino as a "fire and forget weapon," which does not require further guidance after you launch it towards a target.

"He was a true Soldier and a professional," said Corley. "No matter what the task was, 'Dino' could be counted on. He was the type of Soldier where you could give him the task, walk away and come back and it's better than what it was."

Scardino and his wife Katy were married for two years. He was also a recent graduate of Mississippi College School of Law.

The 27-year-old Hattiesburg native died on Aug. 8 while attending the Signal Basic Officer Leadership Course at Fort Gordon, Ga. His

body was discovered after he failed to arrive at a designated location.

The cause of death is still under investigation.

More than 20 family members and friends attended the memorial service, including his father Leonard Scardino.

"The unit did a fantastic job," said Leonard, who lives in Hattiesburg. "I was very pleased with it. We know that they were all brothers and that this was very difficult for them."

"My son was a loving husband and a man who loved his country," he said.

Scardino enlisted in the Mississippi Army National Guard on May 26, 2003, as a satellite communication systems operator-maintainer and achieved the rank of staff sergeant during more than 10 years of enlisted service.

He received a direct commission to second lieutenant on Nov.

20, 2013, as a signal officer.

During his military service, Scardino received the Bronze Star Medal, the Army Commendation Medal,

the Humanitarian Service Medal, the Overseas Service Ribbon, the NATO Medal, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Mississippi War Medal, the Mississippi Emergency Service Medal and the Parachutists Badge.

"Emotions were high during the ceremony. You could feel the love for him throughout this building today and that means a lot to us," said the elder Scardino.

**"This is also a way for us to tell his family what their son meant to us and to tell them what kind of man they raised."**

- Sgt. 1st Class Steven Corley



Maj. Robert Bourgeois, 2nd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group commander, and Katy Scardino, the widow of 2nd Lt. Anthony Scardino, hold up a picture that will be displayed in his honor at the unit's headquarters in Jackson.



## International relations

### Mississippi delegation visits

### Uzbekistan embassy



*Above, Gen. Frank J. Grass, Maj. Gen. Augustus L. Collins and Uzbek Ambassador Bakhtiyar Gulyamov talk during an Uzbek Independence Day reception at the country's embassy in Washington, D.C., Sept. 9. Right, Maj. Amanda D. Villeret (left) and Collins (right) pose for a photo with the ambassador and his wife.*



WASHINGTON, D.C. - At the request of the Republic of Uzbekistan, a delegation of the Mississippi National Guard attended an Independence Day reception at the Uzbek embassy in Washington, D.C., on Sept. 9.

Maj. Gen. Augustus L. Collins, the Adjutant General of Mississippi, Maj. Amanda D. Villeret, director of the Mississippi State Partnership Program, and Capt. Robert W. Sanders, Collins' aide-de-camp, represented Mississippi at the reception.

The state delegation joined Gen. Frank J. Grass, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, George A. Krol, U.S. Ambassador to Uzbekistan and other U.S. agency leadership who were requested by Uzbek Ambassador Bakhtiyar Gulyamov.

Mississippi has had a partnership with Uzbekistan through the National Guard Bureau's State Partner-

ship Program since 2012. Uzbekistan gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.

The State Partnership Program (SPP) evolved from a 1991 U.S. European Command decision to set up the Joint Contact Team Program in the Baltic Region with Reserve component Soldiers and Airmen. A subsequent National Guard Bureau proposal paired U.S. states with three nations emerging from the former Soviet Bloc and the SPP was born, becoming a key U.S. security cooperation tool, facilitating cooperation across all aspects of international civil-military affairs and encouraging people-to-people ties at the state level.

This low-cost program is administered by the National Guard Bureau, guided by State Department foreign policy goals, and executed by the state adjutants general in support of

combatant commander and U.S. Chief of Mission security cooperation objectives and Department of Defense policy goals.

Through SPP, the National Guard conducts military-to-military engagements in support of defense security goals but also leverages whole-of-society relationships and capabilities to facilitate broader interagency and corollary engagements, thereby spanning military, governmental, economic and social realms.

Through the office of the Adjutant General and Governor, institutional and people-to-people relationships are developed that can be sustained over the long term. The SPP facilitates local government, academic and economic contacts as well as National Guard and civilian community involvement in personal contacts with the Partner country. The program also facilitates linking the right personnel, with the right skills and qualifications, at the right time to accomplish the mutually agreed upon strategic objectives.

## 209th redesignated in January ceremony

■ *Story by Vicki Terrinoni, Sun Herald*

GULFPORT -- The 209th Civil Engineer Squadron officially became part of the Air Force Special Operations Command on Saturday with its redesignation to the 209th Special Operations Civil Engineer Squadron. The Special Operations Command operates out of Hurlburt Field, Fla.

The name change is a formality, because the squadron started its affiliation with Special Operations in 2003.

"The redesignation event signifies the 209th being incorporated into the Special Operations Command," said Sr. Master Sgt. Randy Woodall, 209th Emergency Management superintendent, during the ceremony at the Combat Readiness Training Center.

Lt. Col. Kathleen Vaughn, commander of the 209th, said the mission did not change with the redesignation. It remains one of setting up what's known as a Collective Protective Small Shelter System in case of a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear threat. The shelter is a large tent system with a protective liner that provides fil-

tered air in a super-pressurized system to protect troops in case any of the above warfare threats is present.

The 209th deployed to Florida in 2004 after Hurricane Ivan and to South Mississippi in 2005 after Hurricane Katrina.

It also deployed several times to the Middle East in support of the Iraqi and Afghanistan missions.

Maj. Gen. Augustus Collins, the Mississippi adjutant general, had high praise for the 209th during his remarks at the ceremony. "This unit has served our country well across the globe as well as here at home.

"You won't find a group of people more dedicated. They are prepared to perform their mission any time, anywhere. Today, they officially become part of Special Operations. It is a tall task, but one I know they will be up to."

Until needed elsewhere, the squadron will continue its work on the Coast as the new 209th Special Operations Civil Engineer Squadron.



*Maj. Gen. Augustus L. Collins, Lt. Col. Kathleen Vaughn, and Col. David Piech unveil the colors of the 209th Civil Engineer Squadron on Jan. 1 at the Combat Readiness Training Center in Gulfport. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt Alvin Johnson, HQ MSANG Public Affairs)*





*Mississippi Air National Guard aircrew with the 186th Air Refueling Wing conduct a preflight safety brief during Exercise Southern Strike 15 at Key Field, Meridian, on Nov. 4, 2014. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Alexandra Minor, 1st Combat Camera Squadron)*