

YEAR IN REVIEW

GUARD DETAIL



A CHRONICLE OF THE MISSISSIPPI ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD



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Letter From THE EDITOR

Hope for a Bright and Prosperous New Year



“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”
~ Jeremiah 29:11

How does one describe the events of 2020? It seems as though all of our training has been put to work, all at once, in one single year. Our Soldiers and Airmen have responded throughout our state, our nation and during overseas contingency operations in a multitude of locations. For many, 2020 is referred to as “The Year of the Guard,” due to the exemplary contributions and sacrifices of our men and women in uniform and the families that support them.

As of December 31, the effects of the Novel Coronavirus, known as COVID-19, has taken its toll on Mississippi, claiming the lives of 4,787 Mississippians according to the Mississippi State Department of Health. MSNG Soldiers and Airmen have served on the front lines in defense against this invisible enemy as members of the governor's COVID-19 State Task Force, led by Mississippi's State Health Officer, Dr. Thomas Dobbs, and the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency, led by Director Greg Michel, as a supporting agency.

As we close the chapter on 2020, MSNG contributions include – approximately 1,100 service members activated for COVID-19 response; over 426,700 miles traveled to deliver more than 1.2 million pieces of vital personal protective equipment to over 4,700 hospitals, health care facilities, long term care facilities and correctional facilities statewide; and administering more than 170,000 COVID-19 tests at community drive-thru testing sites throughout the state as members

of Outreach Response Testing Teams. Needless to say, the MSNG men and women continue to serve as vital contributors to our state and nation, serving our neighbors and our communities as we continue the fight against COVID-19.

This past year has stretched and tested our resiliency, skills, and resourcefulness. In addition to the ongoing efforts associated with COVID-19, our service members, families and facilities have felt the impact of severe weather ripping through our state on multiple occasions and, in many cases, treacherous weather impacts occurring only days apart. We assisted in rescue and recovery efforts and resource distribution to our neighbors in the aftermath of flooding and deadly tornadoes on Easter Sunday and multiple hurricanes affecting south Mississippi and our neighboring states. Our resiliency and determination as leaders and stakeholders in our communities keeps us strong during these trying times.

MSNG responded to a different challenge in our nation's capital in the wake of civil unrest. Members of the 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team safeguarded lives and property by protecting our citizen's right to protest while protecting national monuments from vandalism. Our Soldiers and Airmen answered our nation's call within 36 hours of receiving orders, confirming our patriotism and devotion to duty regardless of the mission.

The demands and challenges of 2020 at home and abroad have sharpened our skills and heightened our readiness. We can all look forward to the New Year with renewed strength and hope on the horizon as vaccines become available and improving technology allows us to adapt to challenges while increasing our productivity. We look forward to welcoming home our deployed personnel from the 204th Air Defense Artillery Regiment serving overseas and in the National Capital Region, as well as other Guardsmen serving in operations around the world.

Regardless of the challenges, the Mississippi National Guard is ready and resilient. As we prepare to welcome a New Year, with optimism and hope, I encourage you to take this time to lift up your team and continue leading by example with honor and integrity.

In the words of author Mary Roach, “Heroism doesn't always happen in a burst of glory. Sometimes small triumphs and large hearts change the course of history.” Thank you Mississippi National Guard Soldiers, Airmen and Families for your dedication to duty, devotion to our great state, and your continued service.

Lt. Col. Deidre D. Smith
Editor-in-Chief



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Chief Warrant Officer 5 Thomas W. Smith

Fellow Guardsmen,

It is an honor and privilege to address you once again in this format. I enjoy every opportunity to share with you about what is happening in our Warrant Officer cohort of the Mississippi Army National Guard (MSARNG). Before we get into the thick of things, some of you might wonder, what exactly is a Warrant Officer? I'm glad you asked.

The Warrant Officer's role in the Army is ever changing and evolving. 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. I encourage leaders at all levels to utilize Warrant Officers where possible and leverage their knowledge and experiences to benefit their respective organizations.

In my previous article back in 2018, I mentioned that my number one priority was recruiting and retaining qualified Warrant Officers to provide MSARNG commanders with a ready and future force. Little did I know then what was about to transpire. Included later in this edition of the Guard Detail magazine, you will be introduced, and covered in detail, to a premier program that is unique to the 54 states and territories. This program is called the Warrant Officer Candidate Accession Program (WOCAP). It was introduced and commissioned by MG Boyles back in June 2019 and officially implemented in October 2019. We started WOCAP with 8 members, and 15 months later, we are up to 57. Word is spreading fast along with a lot of excitement and interest. I encourage you to read that article carefully and help us spread the word!

Over the past 2 years, we have also had some great policies im-

plemented at the NGB level to help us retain quality Warrant Officers. One of those policies to note was the reduction of the time in grade requirement for W2-W3 and W3-W4 promotions by 1 year, regardless of the position grade assigned. Another policy similar to this one in the retention arena, aligned National Guard professional military education requirements for grades W2-W4 with that of the Active Army and U.S. Army Reserves. These policies along with a measured variety in assignments across our formation will help us maintain a ready and available posture well into the future.

Being a Warrant Officer has been one of the greatest experiences and rewards of my life. I would not be doing my due diligence without making a plea to all leaders out there in identifying someone you may know that would make a great Warrant Officer. Though our primary audience for recruiting Warrant Officers is the Army Non-commissioned officer, we do get some from the other services as well. Civilian acquired skills is also weighed heavily when considering someone's qualifications.

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve in this capacity and to address the great Soldiers and Airmen of the Mississippi National Guard. I look forward to continuing this journey alongside each of you as we serve the people of our great state and nation.

Thomas W. Smith
Chief Warrant Officer 5
Command Chief Warrant Officer
Mississippi Army National Guard

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER



"This is my country and I believe in her, and I will serve her, and I'll contribute to her welfare whenever and however I can. If she has any ills, I'll stand by her until in God's given time, through her wisdom and her consideration for the welfare of the entire nation, she will put them right."

Gen. Daniel "Chappie" James Jr

There is no greater glory than that of serving our nation. Less than one percent of the American populace has ever worn the uniform and the mean age at which one enters service is twenty one. Additionally, the mean tenure of military service is twelve years, three months. What leads so few Americans to join the Armed Services and what makes them stay so long? In my assessment, the answer to both of those questions has always been – Honor!

Honor is experiencing that overwhelming stir of the soul that makes us walk more confidently when wearing our dress uniforms. Honor is the feeling that drives us to stand taller than others during the playing of our national anthem. We've all grit our teeth as we pass the memorials of those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice – that's Honor.

In fact, it's with the highest degree of honor that every word of this article is dedicated to my friend and brother, the late 2nd Lt. Matthew R. Stovall. Matt died in Mosul, Iraq on August 22, 2004, when an improvised explosive device exploded near his vehicle. What connected Matt and I initially was the fact that we both sought a common goal; however, the glue that bound us together as brothers for life is Honor! Honor transcends race, color, creed and religious preference. She transcends socioeconomic status and, above all, she never reduces herself to divisiveness and demagoguery.

Without institutional honor, our Soldiers and Airmen are no longer afforded the opportunities through which they develop friendships and familial bonds. According to Dr. Leonard Wong, an associate research professor at the U.S. Army War College, unit cohesion is a key issue in motivating Soldiers to fight. The question every military leader should be asking today is 'How have the prevailing protests, political propaganda and pandemic begun to affect the warrior spirit?'

This year has been challenging, to say the least. To a large degree, the 'new normal' has brought with it some 'old enemies.' As members of the Mississippi National Guard, we are among our Nation's finest and we should represent the very best of her ideals. That said, it is always wise to conduct successive checks on our messaging and to ascertain whether they are in keeping with the kind of unanimity that sustains honor within our units or the kind of ubiquity that makes her a soft target.

Chaplain LTC Antoine D. Barlow
MSNG State Chaplain



MSNG PRESENTS OUR NEW OFFICIAL SEAL

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

A picture is worth a thousand words. Military traditions have long honored the use of symbolism through heraldic designs visually recognizable among our formations. This symbolism is known as the unit's crest, an official seal, or as referenced in history, a coat of arms. The visual image distinctly represents the skills of a unit and its service members, while honoring the lineage of units' contributions toward the ongoing fight for freedom. This time-honored tradition of military crests and official seals honors the past, inspires the present and celebrates the future of an organization.

The Mississippi National Guard has turned a challenge into an opportunity to excel. The events that transpired during this past year are complex. The various missions faced by our service men and women are unprecedented in comparison to previous years.

On Tuesday, June 30, 2020, Gov. Tate Reeves signed into law, House Bill 1796, establishing a commission to redesign the Mississippi State Flag. With the simple stroke of a pen, the executive order touched every corner of our state, promoting change and the foundation for equality and inclusivity for every Mississippian. In response to the bill, the state flag was retired and removed from all official facilities and visual representations of state organizations.

Change was inevitable. The previous MSNG Official Seal featured the retired state flag behind the National Guard Minuteman. This new bill prompted the MSNG to immediately initiate action to change our official seal. Our Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles, appointed a dynamic group of leaders, representing Army and Air Force units from throughout the state, charged with the redesign of the Official Seal of the Mississippi National Guard.

"The new seal is not what I expected; however, after reflecting on it, I am moved to understand this is how our future Soldiers and Airmen perceive their role in our nation's security. For them, the seal represents that we are an operational force standing side by side with our active component counterparts; that twenty years of steady deployments define us today; and, that as we invest in our future leaders and recruits - this is the symbol they choose to represent their commitment and contribution. I am proud to support their decision," said Boyles.

The MSNG Redesign Committee, led by presiding officer, Lt. Col. Deidre D. Smith, MSNG Director of Public Affairs, began the task of redesigning the



U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Janson Durr Boyles signs the order to change the seal of the Mississippi National Guard October 16, at Joint Force Headquarters in Jackson, Miss. The former flag was retired earlier in the year and removed from all official facilities and visual representations of state organizations, causing the MSNG to redesign our seal. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Christopher Shannon II)



The Mississippi National Guard Official Seal Redesign Committee pose for a photo with members of the command team at Joint Force Headquarters in Jackson, Miss., October 16. The committee's job was to review, change, and decide on a new seal for the organization that reflected all members equally. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Christopher Shannon II)



U.S. Army Capt. Ian Scroubelos, member of The Mississippi National Guard Official Seal Redesign Committee, judges a proposed seal design at Joint Force Headquarters in Jackson, Miss., October 16. The committee's job was to review, change, and decide on a new seal for the organization that reflected all members equally. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Christopher Shannon II)

official seal in July. The committee examined extensive research of various state seals and the heraldry, symbolism and distinctive characteristics of Mississippi Guard units. They sought the creative insight of three local marketing agencies in an effort to examine every perspective possible for the new design.

The outside marketing agencies included Mad Genius, Godwin and Liquid Creative, all from the Jackson metro area. They were tasked to design a new seal that represented several key elements – represent both services of the Mississippi National Guard; represent the history and heritage of our formation through imagery, graphic design and color; be a unique design that stands out from other states' National Guard seals and stands the test of time; the design must be professional and identifiable on various platforms such as social media, business cards, magazines, graphic art prints, billboards and any attentional 'good idea fairy' publication opportunities we could dream up.

The committee was a diverse balance of Army and Air Force service members, with a balanced representation of ethnicity, gender, age, unit, duty location, and military occupational specialty. To further broaden the representation of all things Mississippi, the committee reached out for recommendations from some of our retired comrades throughout the state.

The committee met on August 5 to begin the process of reviewing graphic designs developed by the three marketing companies as well as the MSNG Public Affairs Team. They conducted five rounds of in-depth analysis, group evaluation, redesign recommendations, and priority selection to find the perfect design to represent our courageous men and women serving throughout our state, our nation and deployed around the world.

Serving as the presiding officer has been a true highlight to my military career. I am honored and humbled to work with the dedicated professionals of the Mississippi National Guard. The men and women selected for this committee represent every corner of our state. They are the voice and the future of our organization.

The committee chose a base design developed by the Mad Genius Marketing Agency, and with a few modifications, the MSNG State Public Affairs team developed a final draft. After a unanimous vote from the committee, the design was presented to Maj. Gen. Boyles for review and final approval. With a few final polishing touches, Maj. Gen. Boyles approved the new MSNG Official Seal.

General Order number 2020-002 was signed into effect on November 9, 2020 by Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles, Maj. Gen. Billy M. Nabors, the assistant adjutant general – Air, and Command Sgt. Maj. John T. Raines, MSNG Senior Enlisted Leader.

The committee's unanimous vision and steadfast efforts to redesign the Official Seal of the Mississippi National Guard will leave a legacy for future generations. The new Official Seal represents our strength through diversity and our warrior spirit ready for any mission in support of our state and nation.

SCAN HERE
WATCH THE REVEAL OF
THE NEW OFFICIAL SEAL
OF THE MISSISSIPPI
NATIONAL GUARD!



MSNG WOULD LIKE
TO THANK THOSE
THAT CONTRIBUTED
TO THE NEW SEAL!

Lt. Col. Deidre Smith

Brig. Gen. (R) James A. Peden Jr.

Lt. Col. Andy Thaggard

Lt. Col. Cydridge Gray

Lt. Col. Amanda Villeret

Lt. Col. Adam Harris

Capt. Amanda Woods

Capt. Ian Scroubelos

Capt. Martini Ford

2nd Lt. Chris Murray

Staff Sgt. LuWillie Donelson Jr.

Staff Sgt. Timothy Gardner

Staff Sgt. Lacey Travis

Staff Sgt. William Schultz

Staff Sgt. Zarina Stephenson

Sgt. Jovi Prevot

Chelsy Ables



MISSISSIPPI NATIONAL GUARD OFFICIAL SEAL

Scroll:
A silver scroll bearing the words "Army" and "Air" represents the joint force.

Trident:
Neptune's Trident is symbolic of the great Mississippi River. Neptune in Roman mythology, also identified as Poseidon in Greek mythology, is known as the "Father of Waters."

Inner Field:
The inner field of blue is the ceremonial color of the Army.

Stars:
The two stars under the Eagle's wings represent the Adjutant General of Mississippi's rank of Major General.

Eagle:
The Eagle, holding an olive branch in his dexter talon and a bundle of three (3) arrows in his sinister talon, denotes a desire for peace but preparedness for war.

Outer Field:
The outer field of blue represents the Air Force.

Motto:
"Virtute et Armis" is the motto of the State of Mississippi, meaning "By Valor and Arms."

Shield:
The shield is symbolic of "The Great Seal of the State of Mississippi" covering the heart of the Eagle. The Concord Minuteman, a traditional symbol of the Militia, stands within this shield, honoring the legacy of the "Citizen Soldier."



SOLDIER RECOGNIZES EMPLOYER'S SUPPORT

Story by Spc. Christopher M. Shannon II
102d Public Affairs

A Guardsman and Reservist's service is unique – we have a full-time civilian employer and an added commitment of serving our state and country, which can be challenging from time to time. The Employer Support of Guard and Reserve (ESGR) program is led by the Department of Defense in order to foster positive relationships between service members and their employers through outreach, recognition, and educational opportunities.

I had the honor of awarding my two civilian supervisors with awards on November 17. BankPlus was awarded the ESGR Seven Seals Award for their outstanding service to the National Guard through their continued support. My supervisors, Teresa Bailey, BankPlus assistant vice president and system support manager, and Lannie Kelly, BankPlus vice president of support services manager, were awarded the ESGR Patriot Award for their relentless efforts supporting my service to the nation.

These awards are well-deserved and way past due. I have been a member of the Mississippi Army National Guard for nearly six years now and four of those years I have been a part of the BankPlus family. Over the past four years, I have been on State Active Duty orders, Active Duty Operational Support orders and federal COVID Response orders; all together spending more than two years away from my BankPlus family answering the call to serve.

ESGR's motto is "Together We Serve." I felt it was important to nominate Teresa, Lannie and BankPlus for the ESGR awards because they embody that motto. They have been with me and stuck by me through hurricanes, tornadoes, multiple month-long training exercises and currently, a pandemic response; all while cheering me on, checking on me and my family, and supporting my military growth and career.

Day after day, month after month, and year after year, my supervisors and my BankPlus family have continued to impress me with how much they are willing to support and sacrifice, in order for me to go help those in need in my community.

Due to the nature of my job in the Guard, I have to be ready for a mission at the sight of a text message or email. My jobs before BankPlus were not as accommodating to the rapid changes in my schedule. Although, they could not punish me for it, I felt there was some resentment from management and fellow coworkers for drills, the two-week long Annual Training and especially the spur of the moment missions. That all changed with BankPlus. Now, it is as easy as giving Teresa a call or text, and her and Lannie work it out.

My department, System Support, is operational 24 hours a day, five days a week and on-call 24 hours a day the other two days. System Support has a total of five people, including myself, so there is plenty of work to go around. When I leave, 20 percent of the department's workforce is out-of-office. When there is no one else to step in, Teresa will fill the gap. She does not complain nor put it off on another employee. She simply steps up and absorbs the workload. Despite that, she still encourages me to go and tells me to be safe. For my leadership to roll up their sleeves to replace me and encourage me along the way, in my mind, is the definition of support.

Lannie and so many others – too many to name – display their support by wishing me well, checking on me while I am gone, checking up on my family and even asking if I need to rest a day before coming



From left, Lt. Col. Deidre D. Smith, director of public affairs, Spc. Christopher M. Shannon II, a public affairs specialist with the 102d Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, Eloise "Gee Gee" Patridge, senior executive vice president and chief operations officer for BankPlus, Teresa Bailey, assistant vice president and systems support manager for BankPlus, Hugh "Lannie" Kelly, vice president and support services manager for BankPlus, pose for a photo after an awards ceremony held at BankPlus in Ridgeland, Miss., Nov. 17. The awards were presented by Soldiers of the Mississippi National Guard on behalf of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve. Bailey and Kelly were each presented with the Patriotic Employer Award and BankPlus was recognized with the Seven Seals Award. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Jovi Prevot)

back to work. The amount of compassion and thoughtfulness the entire BankPlus family has offered me is nothing short of therapeutic to the constant stress and fatigue I experience on these missions. That alone deserves an award because it takes the stress out of wanting to serve your community, state, and nation without fearing retaliation or losing your job. All of us who serve know that having dependable, helpful people around is priceless, and it is rare to find those qualities in someone who is not a member of our immediate family.

I highly recommend that if you have an employer who deserves one of these awards, that you nominate them for one today. It is never too late to show your appreciation to those who do the most for you and it is easier than you may think.

Go online to <https://www.esgr.mil/> and click "Nominate Your Employer" or on the top bar click "Employer Awards." Some awards, like the Seven Seals Award, will require you to contact an ESGR representative. Contact information for a representative close to you is also on the site. At the top of the homepage of ESGR, you will see a "State Pages" button that will take you to a map of the United States. Choose your state and you will find your state's representative info on the right side of the page. It took me just a moment of my time to give thanks to them in a big way – a way I am sure they will remember. Recognizing them is the least we can do, after all, they have done so much for us.





U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Morgan Brunson, an aerospace medical service specialist assigned to the 172d Airlift Wing, Mississippi Air National Guard, currently serving as a member of a COVID-19 mobile testing team, prepares to administer a COVID-19 test at the Pearl River Community Health Department in Carriere, Miss., Apr. 4. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Jovi Prevot)



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



U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Alejandra Bruce, with the 186th Air Refueling Wing, Mississippi Air National Guard, dons the proper protective equipment before administering the COVID-19 test at the Madison County health department in Canton, Miss., November 18. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Christopher Shannon II)



U.S. Army Pfc. Alandes T. Rowsey, a combat medic specialist assigned to the 223rd Engineer Battalion, Mississippi National Guard, currently serving as a member of a COVID-19 outreach testing team, administers a COVID-19 test at the Mississippi State Veterans Home in Kosciusko, Miss., May 15. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Jovi Prevot)

YEAR IN REVIEW

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

Of all the words used to characterize 2020, “unprecedented” is one of the most appropriate, when taking into account the range and breadth of the mission for the Mississippi National Guard.

Amidst preparing for deployments, hosting a national competition, supporting an international training exercise, responding to natural disasters and standing guard during civil unrest, more than 1,100 of our Guardsmen and women deployed in support to COVID-19, and will continue to serve through 2021.

The Mississippi National Guard’s role in the Governors’ State COVID-19 Task Force provided the manpower needed by the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency and the Mississippi Department of Health and, by doing so, has demonstrated the versatility and significance of the Guard.

Soldiers and Airmen supported various capabilities from testing and vaccination operations to legal, logistical and communications support.

The MSGNG supported administering nearly 170,000 COVID tests at multiple locations throughout the state and more than 7,000 Vaccines to Mississippians in the final weeks of 2020.

The Guard has also supported the Task Force’s mission by transporting more than 1.2 million pieces of necessary personal protective equipment to thousands of facilities across Mississippi. Logisticians trekked more than 426,000 miles to deliver PPE throughout Mississippi, including gloves, sanitizer, face shields, and nearly 25 million masks.

Throughout the year, our Soldiers and Airmen could be found at hospitals, healthcare facilities, long-term care facilities and correctional facilities serving their communities and state in every county when they were needed most.

The old slogan of the National Guard, “Always Ready, Always There,” has never been more true than this past year.

COVID-19 TASK FORCE

YEAR IN REVIEW



Gulfport CRTC Supports Vital U.S. Troop Movement Amid COVID-19 Pandemic

Story and photo by **A. Danielle Thomas**
CRTC Public Affairs

The Gulfport Combat Readiness Training Center is helping United States active duty military forces continue vital troop movements throughout the world amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The Gulfport CRTC’s mission centers on providing units the opportunity to execute readiness training exercises by providing support such as billeting, food service, ramps, and work space.

In early Spring, as COVID-19 swept through the nation, Gulfport CRTC Commander Col. Berry McCormick, said many units were forced to call off their plans due to infection risks. However, those cancellations opened a window of opportunity when the U.S. Navy approached the Mississippi National Guard seeking assistance in establishing a location for service members to social distance.

“The Gulfport CRTC had the capacity because of COVID. Units have been canceling their training because they can’t travel here. So I had the space,” McCormick said.

The MSNG entered an agreement allowing hundreds of Sailors from the U.S.S. Tripoli to stay at the Gulfport CRTC. Starting in late April, 530 Sailors evacuated to the base from their ship were allowed to move about while maintaining social distance requirements. Then in late June, the Navy decided to confine Sailors to their rooms for a period.

“We had 800 Sailors that needed to be quarantined for three weeks,” said Capt. William Whitmire, Gulfport Naval Construction Battalion Center commander. “None of the hotels or federal military installations in the area had the available space. However, the Guard had the ability to make it possible, and I’m not sure what we would have done without them.”

Months after the U.S.S. Tripoli set sail, the Gulfport CRTC welcomed active duty Airmen for a U.S. Air Force Restriction of Movement operation known as Camp Gulfport.

“We’re sort of not set up for this kind of thing without the cadre. I don’t have the manpower to do this,” McCormick said. “There is no way that we were ever going to get this done if the 403d Wing hadn’t stepped up to the plate.”

The 403d Reserve Wing, based at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi,

provides slightly less than half of the cadre for Camp Gulfport. The reservists work alongside Guard members from several states. For the Mississippi National Guard, the team members include the 255th Air Control Squadron, 209th Special Operations Civil Engineer Squadron, 186th Air Refueling Wing, and Gulfport CRTC. When Airmen arrive at Camp Gulfport, the staff conducts health screenings on the Airmen and assigns them to individual rooms. During an observation period for possible COVID-19 symptoms, the Airmen are only allowed a few hours outdoors each day during which they have to maintain social distancing.

“Honestly, we haven’t had to do mass Restriction of Movement before. COVID has created this for us,” said Lt. Col. Dena Williams, 403d Wing Camp Gulfport Detachment commander. “We’re going to exist for the time that we are needed and process as many deployers as possible.”

Most ROM operations are currently set up on active duty bases. Williams said the Air Force’s decision to establish a site at an Air National Guard base was heavily influenced by a backlog of deployments.

“They’re looking at beds, and they’re looking at the numbers that we can bring in,” said Williams. “That’s one of the appealing things about the CRTC. Setting up a restriction of movement on an active duty base can be limited in that they may only be able to relinquish a certain number of rooms versus what we have capability-wise here.”

During overseas deployments, it’s common for Guardsmen, reservists and active duty forces to work together to achieve a common goal. That same cooperation is taking place at Camp Gulfport. It’s an operation McCormick is proud to say is almost entirely comprised of Airmen who agreed to come when asked.

“I think it’s a testament to the can-do attitude and the willingness of Guardsmen and reservists to volunteer in a supporting role to help the war fighter on the other end,” McCormick said.

“All the combatant commanders require manpower on a regular basis. Because of COVID, they have been unable to move the manpower to theater without doing this restriction of movement,” said McCormick. “Imagine that you’re sitting overseas. It doesn’t matter if you’re active duty, reservist or a Guardsman. You’ve been over there for six months, and your time is coming. But you’re not getting to come home, because no one is coming to replace you. That’s why this is a very important job.”



Approximately 150 Soldiers from the 859th Engineer Company (Vertical) deplane after landing at the Combat Readiness Training Center in Gulfport, Miss., May 21. (U.S. National Guard photo by A. Danielle Thomas)

WORLDWIDE SERVICE

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

More than 15 percent of the Mississippi National Guard has been activated for nearly a year in support of either federal overseas missions or in federal response to the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters in 2020.

Members of the 114th Military Police Company had a unique experience during their deployment to Kuwait early in the year. Soldiers of the unit trained females in the Kuwaiti Police Special Forces Unit. Only females can train females in the country, so the initiation of this endeavor had to come from outside the ranks of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Defense; and MSARNG MPs were the ones selected to take on this monumental task that is pioneering the equality for women in Kuwait.

“So this is actually just the new group of instructors to take over the VIP team,” said Capt. Margaret Krisle, commander of the Clinton-based 114th Military Police Company. “The only other U.S. force to train them was a group of female Marines in 2016. This is the first time the Army has trained them. Their leadership has changed since 2016 and these girls were selected to be the new instructors,” she said.

“It was great for me. It’s probably one of the best things I’ve done.

It made me realize that what we’re doing here is larger than law enforcement on the post. It opened a whole new dynamic to what we’re trying to do.”

In June, Mississippi’s Aviation Support Detachment of Company B, deployed to the Middle East with their Minnesota-based parent command, the 834th Support Battalion, 185th Aviation Brigade, and returned home in October.

Newton’s 1st Battalion, 204th Air Defense Artillery Regiment deployed for two different missions in March.

Part of the battalion deployed to Washington, D.C., to provide short-range air defense of the nation’s capital. This mission is the unit’s fourth rotation defending the National Capital Region and the first since an 11-month mission which began in 2015 and ending in mid-2016.

It is one of seven National Guard units that manages the Capital mission — a task that is only conducted by the National Guard. In 2003, the 1-204th was the first National Guard air defense artillery battalion to execute National Capital Region defense. The unit was also previously deployed to Iraq.

The remaining Soldiers of the unit deployed in support of a training mission in the European theater by participating in the European Deterrence Initiative.

The Newton regiment also has batteries located in Forest, Morton and Bay Springs

In August, the 1108th Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Group deployed to the Middle East supporting operations across the entire Central Command theater of operations.

In addition to overseas operations, more than 1,100 Mississippi Guardsmen were ordered to active federal service to support the Mississippi Department of Health and other agencies with COVID-19 pandemic response efforts. Initially charged with assisting testing and logistics efforts early in the year, the Guardsmen today are also helping to administer the vaccine at 15 sites across the state.

Guardsmen were summoned to active service in September for Hurricane Sally relief efforts and again in October for Hurricane Zeta relief efforts.



The Mississippi National Guard welcomed home the approximately 90 Soldiers of the 114th Military Police Company at Thompson Field in Flowood Sept. 2. The unit returned home following a successful deployment in support of Overseas Contingency Operations. (U.S. Army National Guard photos by Sgt. Scott Tynes)



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

The U.S. Army has units specialized to be able to put Soldiers anywhere in the world within a moment's notice. Soldiers of the 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team got a glimpse of the intensity of deploying at the drop of a hat.

In response to civil unrest and rioting throughout the country, approximately 400 Soldiers assigned to various units in the 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team joined together to form Task Force Magnolia and deploy to Washington, D.C., in June.

The majority of the troops sent were there to provide safety for those wanting to protest.

"My job personally was to help maintain a safe environment for those looking to and actively voicing their beliefs," said Spc. Nik Polson, an infantryman assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry Regiment, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team.

Being in the nation's capital for work, didn't mean it wasn't rewarding and memorable.

"Being there was a very moving experience. I have always wanted to go to DC, but serving my country and community is what I volunteered for," said Polson.

"Regardless of the situations we are put in, I am glad to support the ones who we protect."

The nearly 400 Soldier Task Force was composed solely of volunteers.

"I volunteered to take this mission because I felt like we could make a difference," said Sgt. DaShun Reed, an infantryman assigned to Company A, 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry Regiment, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team.

"On the civilian side, I work in law enforcement and I felt like I could do much more by coming to D.C. to help out," he said. "I felt like we did a great job at our posts."

Everyone had different reasons to volunteer for this mission.

"At first I questioned [volunteering for this mission], but then I looked at the situation and when I found out that the majority of my soldiers were going I knew they needed leadership there and not just any type of leadership," said 1st Lt. Desiree Benson, a field artillery officer assigned to Battery C, 2d Battalion, 114th Field Artillery Regiment, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team.

"[My Soldiers] needed leadership who understood both sides of the cause; someone who understood the importance of why the movement was happening in the first place and could

relate with the people, but who also understood the impact and the importance of safety and that there is always a better way to do things than violence," she said.

Though it was a rewarding experience, the Soldiers did know their mission could have been dangerous.

"While in D.C., my team and I helped oversee many of the monuments and made sure that they were not being vandalized in any type of way. At times, you could definitely feel our presence not wanted there, but I also felt that our show of force helped prevent many situations that could have occurred if we weren't there," said Benson.

In the Army, the mission always comes first.

"I felt a lot of animosity coming from the protesters, but I knew I had a job to do," said Reed.

"It took a lot of work to get there and get back safely, but we did our mission and we did it well," said Lt. Col. Kenneth Anthony, commander of Task Force Magnolia and 2d Battalion, 198th Armored Regiment, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team.

"The best part of the mission for me, as a commander, was to be able to interact with my Soldiers, and to witness first hand their professionalism."



Staff Sgt. Mitchell Scofield,
Region III,
Army National Guard
NCO Best Warrior

SCOFIELD EARNS CHAMPION HONORS AT NBWC

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

In its first year to host the Army National Guard's National Best Warrior Competition, Mississippi also had its first national champion when Staff Sgt. Mitchell Scofield won the Noncommissioned Officer division to advance to the All-Army competition.

Mississippi hosted the grueling NBWC for the Army National Guard regional winners in September at sites throughout the state, including Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center and Camp McCain Training Center.

Scofield, 32, was the oldest competitor among the seven regional noncommissioned officer and enlisted division winners.

"I was exhausted at the moment, but I was a little overwhelmed [at winning], just because of the level of the competitors that were there, how well-rounded they were," he said. "To be among them, I was very honored just to be there."

Cpl. Daniel D'Ippolito, 26, of the Arizona Army National Guard, won the Enlisted, also known as Soldier, division.

The four-day test included 14 competitors, seven regional champions in each division, and 21 events that fell into one of three categories — "shoot, move and communicate," said Command Sgt. Maj. John T. Raines III, senior enlisted leader of the Mississippi National Guard.

Two obstacle courses were involved, as was a 12-mile

ruck march, an Army combat fitness test and a swimming component. A National Guard member's marksmanship was gauged through several shooting events. A competitor's general knowledge and his physical and mental toughness was also assessed.

Some events were surprises.

"There were multiple mystery events inside of the competition, different situational awareness or situational exercises." Scofield, who is 6 feet tall and weighs 215 pounds, added, "The one event that really caught me off guard was a rock climb at the end of the obstacle course. You're physically depleted after coming off the obstacle course, then going directly into a rock climb was very challenging."

Scofield, who estimated the rock climb as 30 feet high, prepared for the Best Warrior Competition through a mixture of physical training and studying.

Scofield and D'Ippolito advanced to the All-Army Best Warrior competition, which also includes active-duty military and the reserves. The virtual All-Army event was held in October, but neither National Guard competitor won.

Scofield said he was not disappointed by his finish in the All-Army competition.

"Not at all," he said. "I was just honored to be competitive at this level of professionalism."

Scofield said he intends to return his focus on his full-time job of instructing students at the 154th Regiment Regional Training Institute and mentoring Mississippi competitors for the next Best Warrior Competition.

Top Left: Staff Sgt. Mitchell Scofield, Mississippi National Guard, negotiates the low crawl during the obstacle course of the Army National Guard 2020 Best Warrior Competition Sept. 15. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Austin Eldridge)

Left (Bottom): Army Staff Sgt. Mitchell Scofield, an infantryman with the Miss. Army National Guard's Regional Training Institute, pulls himself to the end of the line during the "Commando Crawl" portion of an obstacle course event at the Army National Guard's 2020 Best Warrior Competition at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, Sept. 14. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Erich B. Smith)



Sgt. Grant Schafer, North Dakota National Guard, conducts the low crawl portion of the obstacle course during the Army National Guard 2020 Best Warrior Competition Sept. 14, 2020. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Edward Lee)

MISSISSIPPI HOSTS NATIONAL BEST WARRIOR COMPETITION

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

The winners of this year's Army National Guard National Best Warrior Competition were announced September 16 during an awards ceremony at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center in Hattiesburg. Staff Sgt. Mitchell Scofield, Mississippi National Guard, and Cpl. Daniel D'Ippolito, Arizona National Guard, were named the Noncommissioned Officer of the Year and Soldier of the Year 2020, respectively.

Staff Sgt. Matthew Ortiz, New York National Guard, and Spc. Jakob Ellingson, Minnesota National Guard were the Noncommissioned Officer and Soldier runner-ups in the compe-

tition.

This year's winners are a true reflection of ultimate warriors in mind, body, and spirit. Scofield and D'Ippolito were both selected by their peers to receive the Best Warrior Ultimate Teammate Award for exceptional sportsmanship and exemplary comradery for the duration of the competition. The NBWC lasted more than four days and included 21 challenging events incorporating military skills proficiency in categories such as marksmanship, physical fitness, land navigation, and combat lifesaver medical skills, to name a few.

Before the competition kicked off, D'Ippolito, representing Arizona, said that he had high hopes, but would be happy to just do well.

"I want to go in and knock it out

of the park, and I want to make everybody proud. I want to represent the National Guard well and I want to represent the state and my family."

Staff Sgt. Mitchell Scofield, representing Mississippi, described how he felt about winning the Noncommissioned Officer National Best Warrior competition.

"I never would have imagined it in a million years," Scofield said. "I just wanted, number one, for my family to be proud of me for what I do; and number two, represent the 154th RTI [Regiment Regional Training Institute] and the state of Mississippi to make them proud as well."

The National Best Warrior Competition recognizes Soldiers who personify the Warrior Ethos, live by the Army Values, and represent our future

warfighter. Fourteen of the nation's best Army National Guard Warriors, of the approximately 335,000 Soldiers, were eligible to compete and battled against the clock, their peers, the weather and simulated enemy forces to win the title of 2020 National Best Warrior.

Command Sgt. Maj. John T. Raines III, senior enlisted leader of the Mississippi National Guard, explained the complexity of the National Best Warrior Competition and the planning and coordination executed by Mississippi National Guard professionals in preparation to host this year's prestigious event.

"It has been an incredible honor for the Mississippi Army National Guard [MSARNG] to host this year's Army National Guard 2020 National Best Warrior Competition. What you have seen over the past week was the culmination of a few years' worth of planning and rehearsals by the entire [MSARNG] team. Our team took pride in being chosen for the event and fully realized this was a once in a career opportunity that had never happened in Mississippi," said Raines.

"I gave them two main goals. First and foremost was to run a tough realistic event where the focal point was these 14 exceptional Warriors from across our country. The second was to showcase our great state, which means our people, one of the best, most professional, most diverse groups of Citizen Soldiers you will find anywhere in our military. Then I reminded them what it meant to be a servant leader and asked that we handle every interaction with that mindset. They knocked it out of the ballpark and I was extremely proud of what they accomplished," said Raines.

The competitors had diverse backgrounds including - infantrymen, a cannon crewmember, a transportation specialist, combat medics, engineer specialists, military police, satellite communications operator, chemical specialist and a cavalry scout. They have traveled around the world protecting our freedom and showcased their expertise in the quest for the coveted Best Warrior title.

The states represented in the 2020 Army National Guard National Best Warrior Competition were: Texas, North Dakota, Arizona, New York, Maryland, Kentucky, Minnesota, Illinois, Arkansas, South Dakota, Mississippi, and Nevada. These Soldiers were the best of the best in their region, and showed why they made it to the national-level competition.

"It was truly humbling to watch these Warriors compete, but also to watch these other Warriors set the conditions for them to compete. We will now move on to preparing our two winners to move forward and have the opportunity to be crowned "Best Warrior" out of the more than one million person Army," said Raines.

This year's winners advanced to the All Army Best Warrior Competition, a virtual competition this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic, where competitors competed against all components of the Army; active, reserve and national guard. Unfortunately, neither Scofield nor D'Ippolito won at the All Army level competition.

Next year's Army National Guard National Best Warrior Competition will be hosted by Arizona, followed by Tennessee hosting the event in 2022.



Sgt. Brian Murphy, Maryland National Guard, renders aid to a simulated casualty during the Army National Guard 2020 Best Warrior Competition Sept. 13, 2020. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Victoria Miller)



Army Staff Sgt. Mitchell Scofield (right), with the Mississippi Army National Guard's Regional Training Institute, and Cpl. Daniel D'Ippolito (left), with the Arizona Army National Guard, hoist their pistols into the air during the closing ceremony of the Army National Guard's 2020 Best Warrior Competition at Camp Shelby, Miss., Sept. 16. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Erich B. Smith)



Staff Sgt. Anthony Miller, Illinois National Guard, moves through the obstacle course during the Army National Guard 2020 Best Warrior Competition Sept. 14, 2020. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Edward Lee)

HURRICANE SUPPORT

Story by Lt. Col. Deidre Smith and Sgt. Scott Tynes
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office

In the midst of the tornado of events surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mississippi National Guard also helped the state's citizens manage the effects of real storms.

Hurricane Sally was the eighteenth named storm and seventh hurricane of the extremely active 2020 Atlantic hurricane season. It made landfall September 16 near Gulf Shores, Ala., with sustained winds of 105 mph. Although Mississippi spared a direct impact, Sally brought recording-breaking flooding, with the worst of it being in Jackson County. At the peak of the storm, more than 10,000 people were without power along the Gulf Coast, with downed power lines, traffic lights, and trees.

The 223rd Engineer Battalion, from West Point, and the 890th Engineer Battalion, from Gulfport, were ready to respond in support of our partnering civilian emergency response agencies. MSNG units were pre-positioned at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center in Hattiesburg, and at MSNG readiness centers in Piquayune, Pascagoula, and Gulfport. Readiness is always at the forefront of MSNG training.

“The 223rd makes it a priority to emphasize the importance of preparing to support Defense Support to Civil Authorities [DSCA] operations, especially missions related to hurricane response,” said Lt. Col. Thomas Howell, 223rd Engineer Battalion commander. “Responding to these events typically requires quick reaction, so it is important that personnel and equipment are always prepared and ready to deploy when needed. The ability for our Soldiers to deploy with little or no lead time is a reflection of our Soldiers’ commitment and willingness to support their communities and state.”

The 890th and 223rd Engineer Battalions each had three high-water rescue teams prepared to execute missions as directed by the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency prior to the storm’s Gulf Coast landfall.

“Our Soldiers decided to join the National Guard for missions just like this one and look forward to serving the communities where they live, work, and grew up,” said Lt. Col. Jason Holmes, 890th Engineer Battalion commander.

Only a month later, the MSNG was again alerted and responded to aid the citizens of the state as they reeled from Hurricane Zeta, which made landfall as a Category 2 storm near Cocodrie, La., October 28. This storm proved to be more intense and powerful than most weather reports predicted and wreaked havoc on Louisiana and Mississippi Gulf Coast communities with high winds,



U.S. Army Spcs. Dane Spell and Dylan Gullenine, both combat engineers with 288th Sapper Co., Mississippi Army National Guard, unload supplies in preparation to respond to Hurricane Sally at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, near Hattiesburg, Miss., Sept. 15, 2020. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Cdt. Jarvis Mace)

storm surge, flooding, power outages and damage to homes and businesses.

Gov. Tate Reeves declared a state of emergency October 28, followed by President Donald Trump’s approval of a disaster declaration the same day. With presidential approval, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was authorized to provide water, food, tarps, hand sanitizer and masks to the citizens of Mississippi.

Col. Jody Mike Smith, the director of military support for the Mississippi National Guard, said the Guard worked closely with the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and local emergency officials and first responders until the job is done.

“We were able to direct our actions in a timely manner and affect a very rapid response,” Smith said. Adding that Guard members were “proud to serve fellow citizens and assist as needed, and they will be here as long

as the job takes.”

MSNG members assisted MEMA at five distribution sites in Hancock and Harrison Counties.

“We are providing aid, much needed aid, to the people impacted by Hurricane Zeta. As a Gulf Coast resident myself, I feel excited and honored to help these people, my neighbors,” said Sgt. Derrick Woulard, an infantryman with 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry Regiment, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team and Gulfport native.

Guard members activated for Hurricane Zeta response represented the 184th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), headquartered in Monticello; the 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, headquartered in Tupelo; the 223rd and 890th Engineer Battalions; and the 106th Brigade Support Battalion from Laurel.

Guard members also helped with logistics, transportation, distribution of supplies and traffic control.

“We are providing the basic necessities: food, water, and shelter,” said 1st Sgt. David Bemardi, 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry Regiment, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team. “We are doing what the National Guard is meant to do – provide assistance to the state of Mississippi in times of need. MEMA planned and facilitated these distributions, and we are helping with the execution of their plan.”

Spc. Jessie Pursell, and infantryman assigned to the 155th ABCT, was glad to be helping where he could.

“I joined the Guard to support my family and country, and that is what I am doing here,” Pursell said.

FEMA provided more than 210,000 meals, 30,000 tarps and 290,000 bottles of water in support of response and recovery efforts with the distribution assistance of the MSNG.

“We are providing the basic necessities: food, water, and shelter. We are doing what the National Guard is meant to do: provide assistance to the state of Mississippi in times of need. MEMA planned and facilitated these distributions, and we are helping with the execution of their plan.”

- 1st Sgt. David Bernardi



Gregory S. Michel, executive director of the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), and U.S. Army Col. Jody M. Smith, director of military support for the Mississippi National Guard, discuss relief operations in Gulfport, Miss. Sept. 15, 2020. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Don N. Kazery III)



Soldiers with the 288th Sapper Co., Mississippi Army National Guard, unload supplies at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, near Hattiesburg, Miss., in preparation to respond to Hurricane Sally, Sept. 15, 2020. The Mississippi National Guard is prepared to conduct civil support operations, including search and rescue and debris removal, to support local and state authorities. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Victoria Miller)

XCTC DURING COVID

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

The strong commitment to mission accomplishment for commands tasked in training troops in the Mississippi Army National Guard is unwavering – even during a pandemic.

As many communities face the challenges brought upon by COVID-19, the 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT) continues the absolute mission essential work at providing highly trained Soldiers that are ready to do the job when called upon by their country.

“Camp Shelby, the Mississippi National Guard and the Mississippi Department of Health have gone to great lengths in an effort to reduce the spread of Coronavirus at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center during the eXportable Combat Training Capability (XCTC) training period.” said Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center commander Col. Bobby Ginn. “First and foremost, we are practicing all social distancing initiatives to help prevent cross contamination and the spread of Coronavirus.”

All Soldiers involved with the training will take all reasonable precautions to prevent the spread of the virus to include: screening of all Soldiers prior to arrival at Camp Shelby, wearing of facemask and/or gloves in enclosed areas or when not able to maintain a six foot distance, handwashing stations throughout the training area, remaining in established “bubbles” based on units and activities with minimal interaction between bubbles, and twice daily health inspections by medical personnel

“Senior leaders from the Mississippi Army National Guard, Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, the 155th ABCT and 177th Armored Brigade have a plan in place that allows Soldiers to train and reduce the risk



of spreading COVID19 during the 155th ABCT's XCTC training” said Brig. Gen. Amos Parker, assistant adjutant general of the Mississippi Army National Guard.

The goal of XCTC is to ready the 155th ABCT for its National Training Center (NTC) rotation in Fort Irwin, California. After the NTC rotation the 155th will be validated for potential overseas deployment in the future.

Over the intense three weeks of training in the hot and humid environment, that is Camp Shelby, all 155th Soldiers will hone their combat skills of “Shoot, Move, Communicate, and Sustain”.

Policies and best practices at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center have been instituted in order to fully support the 155th ABCT during their XCTC.

In addition to the continued handwashing and face coverings, commanders will ensure that Soldiers will have their temperature taken twice a day and if a Soldier is showing symptoms of COVID-19, that Soldier will be moved out the bubble and transported the COVID-19 medical team at Camp Shelby.

“We have increased medical support with additional Doctors, Physicians Assistants, Nurses and Medics at various areas within the training environment,” said Ginn. “We have established two major quarantine areas, one on post and one out in the training area, that will allow us to separate possible Coronavirus personnel from other training Soldiers, which will help slow the spread of Coronavirus.”

The 155th ABCT will rely heavily on the leaders across its entire formation to ensure the Soldiers are doing their part to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 among the force. Balancing readiness with the health and safety of the force is critical to success of the 155th during their XCTC.

The 155th ABCT, Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, and the 177th Armored Brigade have prepared a comprehensive strategy prior to the start of this exercise to slow the spread of COVID-19, should the need arise.

It is every Soldier's duty to remain prepared to meet any challenge directly and with force. Camp Shelby and the Mississippi Army National Guard is ensuring that our formations and equipment stay ready in this time of crisis, while adhering to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Department of Defense guidelines regarding safety and social distancing.

“It is without a doubt a monumental task,” said Col. Bobby Ginn “with a team effort from our entire staff, we feel confident we can safely conduct training while at the same time contain the Coronavirus.”



U.S. Navy Capt. Jeff Powell (right), Naval Construction Battalion Center Gulfport commander, and U.S. Army Col. M. Guy Reedy (center), commander of Camp McCain Training Center, attend an Installation Commanders Council meeting. (U.S. National Guard photo by A. Danielle Thomas)

Installation Commanders Council

Builds Relationships to Help Service Members in Mississippi

Story and photo by A. Danielle Thomas
CRTC Public Affairs

An organization based on a partnership of military installations across Mississippi is working to improve the quality of life for all service members living in the state. The Installation Commanders Council is made up of the leadership from federal and state military installations. Over the past two years, conference calls and in-person meetings have helped Mississippi National Guard, reserve and active duty commanders develop stronger working relationships.

“The initial benefit of the ICC was to bring all the commanders together to understand who they are and what capabilities that they had,” said Col. Rick Weaver, Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center commander. “You now have an organization that is represented by every military installation commander in the state.”

In November, the Gulfport Combat Readiness Training Center served as the first Mississippi National Guard base to host an ICC meeting. Other locations include Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, the United States Army Corps of Engineers in Vicksburg, and Columbus Air Force Base. Alternating locations helps everyone become familiar with each installation's missions and capabilities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, that knowledge became a crucial component while seeking solutions to social distancing requirements. The ICC is credited for creating the connections that led to U.S. Air Force trainees from Keesler AFB conducting part of their Basic Training at Camp Shelby and for the U.S. Navy sending hundreds of Sailors to quarantine at the Gulfport CRTC.

“One of the benefits of being in the ICC is that when the Navy needed help for this, they knew who to call. We know each other well. They know what our capabilities are,” said Col. Berry McCormick, commander of the Gulfport CRTC.

The organization has sparked new opportunities for different service branches to train jointly prior to working together on deployment.

“With some of these exercises like Southern Strike, we were able to utilize Naval Station Meridian and tie them back into

it, which is a win-win for both sides,” said Weaver. “From our side, it gives us another capability to offer the units that are training. From their side, it gives them additional training from a Joint National Training accredited exercise that now they're participating in. It gives the service member a better scope and throws in nuances that they're not used to.”

Another focus of the ICC is to carry the concerns of service members to the state government. Members hope by keeping elected officials informed about any hardships, they will more likely support policies that improve the quality of life of military members and their families.

“The Air Force is not unique in what our spouses and community needs. The Army and Navy communities need the same thing,” said Col. Heather Blackwell, 81st Training Wing commander. “When we partner together and set our joint priorities, then we can go to the governor with those joint priorities and it makes his job easier to support us.”

While Mississippi isn't the only state to have an organization like the ICC, the U.S. Department of Defense State Liaison Office says the Magnolia State stands out.

“The difference with [Mississippi's] ICC is that they present a list which has a unified voice from all the installation commanders,” said Eric Sherman, southeast regional liaison, DOD SLO. “They take into concern our military quality of life issues as part of a list of mission requirements and not just nice-to-have issues.”

Commanders don't only share ideas within the group on how to better serve service members, they also seek information from military-related organizations. Mississippi Veterans Affairs executive director Stacey Pickering is counted among the guest speakers.

“This intimate group of commanders from across Mississippi, we make sure they are aware of what resources we have that are available to their staff,” said Pickering. “We want to make sure we help file their claim. The state of Mississippi offers it at no charge to assist that veteran and their family to make sure they're getting that disability benefit that they're entitled to - their access to the VA Medical Center and/or any other benefit that they've earned as they've served our country.”



CAMP SHELBY BECOMES AIR FORCE BASIC TRAINING SITE

Airmen Recruits challenge a threatening bystander during an Air Force BEAST scenario. Approximately halfway through their Basic Military Training cycle, they move from Keesler Air Force Base to Camp Shelby for one week of learning tactical skills in the classroom before entering one of the installation's Contingency Operations Locations (COL), which simulates living at a forward operating base during a conflict, for a week of applied tactical exercises.

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

For the first time since the early 1940s, the Air Force is conducting basic military training (BMT) outside of Joint Base San Antonio – Lackland because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“At Lackland Air Force Base, we are typically more secluded when it comes to working as a joint team. But out here at Camp Shelby, we have the opportunity to work on this Army installation and with the Army forces to support us during this COVID adversity,” said Tech. Sgt. Katie Callen, military training instructor with the 737th Training Group, JBSA-Lackland, Texas.

“Every week, we have somewhere between 50 and 60 trainees per flight, which is comparable to what Lackland does but on a smaller scale,” she said. “Lackland is somewhere between 700 and 800 at a time. So the training we have out here is strictly for the trainees who end up going to Keesler Air Force Base for technical school and for their technical training. What that does is that it eliminates a mass transit across the United States in aircraft.”

When the COVID pandemic threatened to cause a disruption in training cycles, the Air Force began looking for opportunities to disperse trainee populations and minimize the risk. Camp Shelby was quickly targeted as a potential site because of its vast training opportunities and proximity to Keesler AFB in Biloxi, which is one of the largest Air Force technical school bases for advanced training.

Callen said a “proof of concept” was held in the spring to see if the plan would support training flights.

“The flight was very, very successful; and from there we decided to come out and sustain operations for six months.”

Trainees begin their BMT at Keesler, engaging in class work, drill and ceremonies, and learning other non-tactical skills. Approximately halfway through their cycle, they move to Camp Shelby for one week of learning tactical skills in the classroom before entering one of the installation's Contingency Operations Locations (COL), which simulates living at a forward operating base during a conflict, for a week of applied tactical exercises.

“When they actually come out here to the Forward Operating Base it is all application, the culmination of everything they have had so far and they have to apply it,” Callen said.

They return to Keesler for the last week of BMT and the graduation ceremony before “literally crossing the street to begin their advanced training,” she said.

“This base, Camp Shelby specifically, is one of the largest training bases for the military in the United States and all different states come out here. It's up for grabs whether or not you want to utilize the land. They do helicopter training, they do tank training - so it actually provides a very authentic environment for what a deployment is actually going to be like.”

Camp Shelby is providing the facilities and infrastructure to support the training, as well as the expertise of the Asymmetrical Warfare training unit.

“The training that we provide here at Camp Shelby is the same training that we provide at Lackland Air Force Base,” Callen said. “The only difference is that instead of having 700-800 trainees we have 60; and we don't have as many cadre, so we work a little bit longer hours, but we can provide so much more one-on-one training for the trainees. We can explain things a little bit better, we have better oversight of them so we can make those corrections and make them a lot more comfortable.”

While at Camp Shelby, the trainees go through the Basic Expeditionary Airman Skills Training (BEAST) portion of BMT, where they learn and apply fundamental war skills such as weapons training, tactical marches, base security, bomb iden-

tification, friend or foe identification and scenario training.

“I expected that things were going to be crazy, simulating a tactical environment, and I think that's exactly what we got. It helps build the foundation of what we could possibly see in the future,” said Trainee Gordon Ellison.

Trainee Logan Richardson said BEAST at Camp Shelby really gave him an understanding of the tactical lessons and how and when to apply them.

“I would say BMT as a whole has been a crazy ride and experience – seeing everyone grow so much from when you got off the bus being all scared and nervous to BEAST in particular. It's taking everything we learned over the past two weeks and applying it; and it was great to finally see that in action,” he said.

Callen said many people are surprised by the similarities between Air Force and Army basic training.

“I think it's interesting how similar our training actually is to one another as opposed to (years ago) when you would assume that Air Force training is Air Force training and Army training is Army training,” Callen said. “But when we're working together, it's very comparable to one another and it makes a very level base for when they go out into a deployed environment together later on. It helps eliminate some of the stereotypes that you hear between branches. In doing so, it creates a lot more respect for one another.”

Camp Shelby will host a total of 18 flights, both male and female, including more than 1,000 trainees. However, that time could be extended depending on the length of the COVID pandemic and the training restrictions it imposes.



An Airman Recruit provides security while his team removes a wounded team member from danger during an Air Force BEAST scenario. For the first time since the early 1940s, the Air Force is conducting basic military training (BMT) outside of Joint Base San Antonio – Lackland because of the COVID-19 pandemic.



An Airman renders first aid to a team mate after an ambush while patrolling the perimeter of their Contingency Operations Location during BEAST.



Airmen advance through a BEAST scenario at Camp Shelby.



Enabling Success

Special Forces Group at AFRICOM

Story and photos by Sgt. Shawn Keeton
102d Public Affairs

The United States Army Special Forces, also known as Green Berets because of their distinctive headgear, train for and execute missions such as unconventional warfare, counter-insurgency, and direct action with an emphasis on language and cultural emersion. Fewer people are familiar with the crucial contributions enablers from 2nd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group perform. Enablers from the Battalion perform their Military Occupational Specialty duties daily, but must also be able to operate gun trucks and integrate into base defense plans. Whether in a small A-Camp in Afghanistan, a team house in Iraq, or partner base in South America, enablers have proved to be a vital piece.

Maj. Daniel Anderson, the 2nd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group advanced operations base commander, describes the unit's recent deployment to the Africa Command area of operations and the support Soldiers that enable mission success. The current mission for the 2-20th SFG is foreign internal defense (FID), this involves working with the host nation and other western partners against violent extremist organizations. The Soldiers work by, with, and through partner forces in an advise and assist role.

"We work with host nation Special Forces by

helping them plan and assist with training on weapons and equipment," Anderson said.

Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) teams are 12-man elements and "having quality support Soldiers allow the team guys to focus on their primary tasks," Anderson said. "ODA teams are asked to do more and more in recent years, which makes enablers more necessary for mission success."

Support companies have cooks, intelligence specialists, ammunition specialists, water purification specialists, and mechanics. Soldiers assigned to support roles not only perform their primary MOS duties, they also have assigned additional responsibilities. These could include base force protection, learning electrical systems and generators, setup and operation of specialized communications equipment, performing maintenance and repairs on the family of special operations vehicles (FOSOV), and sling load inspections.

"We enable the teams to be successful. Sometimes that means checking your ego at the door. Also, being physically and mentally ready to do jobs and tasks that are not in your job description," said Sgt. Samuel Ratcliff, radio operator maintainer, Company C, 2-20th SFG.

Leading up to the deployment, Soldiers complete pre-mobilization training (PMT) that prepares the Special Forces Soldiers as well as the

A Soldier with Company E, 2nd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group, Mississippi Army National Guard, scans the area from a guard tower Feb. 18, 2020, in the Africa Command area of operations. The unit provided base security as part of its tasking during their deployment.



enablers to work together as a team. The PMT integrates support Soldiers with the teams as early as possible. This integration helps build team comradery, develop an understanding of the team's standard operating procedures, and to get them to a competent level when it comes to shoot, move, communicate.

"Everyone cross-trains," Anderson said. "That way, you end up with Soldiers with a profound skill set and knowledge base." The enablers travel with the team they are with and "the PMT's bring them up to a level where they are not a liability to the team, but an asset."

Prior to mobilization, support Soldiers attend additional schools and training. One of these courses is the Special Forces Basic Combat Course. This course, taught by Green Berets, teaches shoot, move, and communicate at the higher level needed to operate in austere environments.

"The course lasts two to three weeks and is sometimes integrated into annual training," Staff Sgt. William Burks with Company E, 2-20th SFG.

Flat range shooting, on-line moving, engaging targets with both rifle and pistol, are all covered in the course. The training also teaches the Soldiers to become comfortable shooting in close proximity in a fast, safe way.

Becoming a support Soldier for a Special Forces Battalion has a few requirements – you must be MOS qualified, pass the APFT to airborne standards, and graduate airborne school within one year of joining the unit. Soldiers are also afforded an initial counseling by the leadership.

"The counseling is both beneficial to the Soldier and the unit," said Anderson. "There is going to be a lot more asked of these Soldiers both in operational tempo and performance as opposed to a conventional unit. If you are up for the challenge of maintaining your physical fitness, being looked at to be more responsible for your actions, and given more opportunities to be more proactive, we may be the unit for you."

"We enable the teams to be successful, sometimes that means checking your ego at the door. Also, being physically and mentally ready to do jobs and tasks that are not in your job description. "

- Sgt. Samuel Ratcliff



Sergeant Samuel Ratcliff with Company C, 2nd Battalion 20th Special Forces Group, Mississippi Army National Guard, teaches proper setup and calibration of a satellite communications (SATCOM) antenna February 19, 2020, in the Africa Command area of operations. Soldiers use SATCOM during their daily operations in remote and austere locations.



A Soldier with Company C, 2nd Battalion 20th Special Forces Group, Mississippi Army National Guard, instructs a rifle marksman class with partner forces February 16, 2020, in the Africa Command area of operations. The Soldiers worked with host nation and partner forces in an advise and assist role during their deployment.



Leadership Changes Abound in 2020

Story by Spc. Christopher Shannon II
102d Public Affairs

With new challenges arriving on a daily basis in 2020, leadership needed to be ready and capable to confront, contain, and overcome those issues with fresh ideas and experienced solutions. The year was full of changes of command and notable promotions throughout the entire formation.

The first major event of the year was the promotion of Brig. Gen. Mike Nabors, the assistant adjutant general – Air, to the rank of major general on March 16 in the Armed Forces Museum at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center.

Just a couple months later, on May 16, Lt. Col. (P) Kendrick Cager took command of the 168th Engineer Brigade during a change of command ceremony at the Vicksburg Readiness Center. The outgoing commander, Col. Kelvin Nichols, retired from the Mississippi Army National Guard. Five months later, Cager was promoted to the rank of colonel during a ceremony at Camp McCain Training Center, October 17.

MSNG's own Maj. Gen. Jeffrey P. "Jeff" Van assumed duties as commander of Joint Task Force Civil Support at Joint Base Langley-Eustis in Hampton, Va., August 28. The task force is the nation's only standing chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) Joint Task Force (JTF) ready to deploy within 24 hours.

Maj. Gen. John Rhodes, MSARNG, became the commander of the 29th Infantry Division at Fort Belvoir, Va., October 3 after serving as the deputy there. Rhodes has previously served as the commander of the 66th Troop Command and as Mississippi's assistant adjutant general – Army.

Army Recruiting and Retention Battalion welcomed newly promoted Lt. Col. Adam Harris as its new commander during a promotion and change of command ceremony at the Joint Force Headquarters in Jackson, October 16.

Col. Guy Reedy took the reins from Col. Richard "Rick" L. Weaver during a change of command ceremony at Camp McCain Training Center October 17.

The ceremony closed the door on Weaver's time as commander of the Grenada installation, but less than a month later, a new door opened. Col. Weaver became the new commander of Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center in Hattiesburg during a change of command ceremony November 6 at the Mississippi Armed Forces Museum. The previous commander, Col. Bobby Ginn Jr., now serves as the new state logistics officer.

December 5 was a big day for the MSARNG. The day started with a change of command for the 184th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) when Brig. Gen. Clint Walker handed the command to Col. (P) Jonathan "Scott" Hubbard at the Monticello Readiness Center.

Approximately 80 miles away and a few hours later, 66th Troop Command said farewell to Brig. Gen. Stanley Budraitis and received Col. (P) Michael Cleveland as the new commander during a change of command ceremony at the Raymond Road Readiness Center in Jackson. Budraitis now serves as the deputy commanding general of United States Army Aviation Center of Excellence at Fort Rucker, Ala.

At the conclusion of the day was the promotion of the new assistant adjutant general - Army, Maj. Gen. John "Trent" Kelly. He took over the responsibilities of ATAG-Army after Brig. Gen. Amos Parker retired November 1.



Col. Joy Alexander was promoted to her rank in October and pinned by her children, Victoria Alexander and Spc. Nicholas Alexander. She is currently the only female colonel in the Mississippi Army National Guard. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Scott Tynes)



Less than a month later, Col. Rick Weaver became the new commander of Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center during a change of command ceremony Nov. 6. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Austin Eldridge)



Lt. Col. (P) Kendrick Cager, incoming commander, holds the 168th Engineer Brigade flag during a change of command ceremony at Vicksburg Readiness Center May 16. Five months later, Cager was promoted to the rank of colonel during a ceremony at Camp McCain Training Center, Miss., Oct. 17. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Christopher Shannon II)



Dec. 5 was a big day with a change of command for the 184th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) where Brig. Gen. Clint Walker handed the command off to Col. (P) Jonathan "Scott" Hubbard at the Monticello Readiness Center. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Scott Tynes)



Army Recruiting and Retention Battalion welcomed newly promoted Lt. Col. Adam Harris as its new commander Oct. 16 at Joint Force Headquarters in Jackson, Miss. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Scott Tynes)



A few hours later, 66th Troop Command bid farewell to Brig. Gen. Stanley Budraitis and welcomed Col. (P) Michael Cleveland as the new commander during a ceremony at the Raymond Road Readiness Center in Jackson, Miss. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Victoria M. Miller)



Col. Guy Reedy (second from right) took the reins from Col. Rick Weaver (left) during a change of command ceremony at Camp McCain Training Center, Grenada, Miss., Oct. 17. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Edward Lee)



Brig. Gen. Amos Parker retired in November, leaving Brig. Gen. John "Trent" Kelly as our newly appointed Assistant Adjutant General – Army. The last event of the day was Kelly's promotion to the rank of major general in the auditorium of the Joint Force Headquarters in Jackson, Miss. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Scott Tynes)

WARRANT OFFICER PROGRAM

Story by CW2 Sylvester Brookins
Warrant Officer Strength Manager

The U.S. Army Warrant Officer Cohort is a group of technical and tactical leaders that are an integral part of today's operational environment as the Army moves its battle focus towards Large Scale Combat Operations. Warrant Officers are Soldiers, officers and technical experts rolled into one. They provide the answers to complex problems within organizations and advise commanders in the completion of assigned missions. The Warrant Officer Cohort was birthed in July 1918 when Congress established the "Mine Planters Service" as part of the US Army Coast Artillery Corps, which evolved into the 44 specialties that are offered today. This article will explain how you can join the ranks of the U.S. Army Warrant Officer Corps.

The path to becoming a Warrant Officer varies by each specialty and, depending on the specialty selected, a Soldier could also qualify with civilian experience. The first step is to contact your Warrant Officer Strength Manager (WOSM) or Warrant Officer Branch Manager within the state. Their responsibility is to assist Soldiers in determining eligibility in pursuing their career path and help mitigate any requirements they may lack.

Once Soldiers identify that they have met the administrative requirements, there are prerequisites for each specialty that must be met in order to begin a pre-determination packet. Technical Warrant Officers and Aviators have very different processes and the WOSM will guide applicants through it. Once an applicant has been approved by their proponent, the Soldier must appear before a Federal Recognition Board before attending Warrant Officer Candidate School (WOCS).

Understanding the complexity of becoming a Warrant Officer, and the amount of time and effort involved, the Warrant Officer Accession team conducted research on how to improve the process. They reached out to the Georgia Army National Guard, whose Warrant Officer accessions were among the highest in the nation. As a result of this collaboration, the Mississippi Army National Guard developed the Warrant Officer Candidate Accession Program (WOCAP) at Camp Shelby, Miss.

The focus of WOCAP is to take possession of a prospect once they have been endorsed by their unit leadership and deemed technically qualified to enter the Warrant Officer ranks. WOCAP will ensure the prospect is administratively prepared and technically certified by their respective proponent. This program will then prepare the prospect for the rigors of WOCS.

Once assigned to WOCAP, the Soldier will drill with the program until completion of WOCS and the Warrant Officer Basic Course (WOBC). While attending these unit assemblies, the Soldier will get assistance with building their MOS predetermination and Federal Recognition packets. In preparation to attend WOCS, the prospects will receive administrative records updates and WOCS related training.

Another unique feature to WOCAP, is "Mentor Hour." Mentor Hour is a designated time where senior warrant officers and unit commanders from across the state share their experiences, advice and assistance. It is



designed to foster a mindset geared towards becoming a warrant officer and helps build relationships needed for future growth.

After completing WOCS, the WO1s return to WOCAP and become mentors to the newly assigned Soldiers who are preparing to attend WOCS. They will continue the mentorship process until they report to their Warrant Officer Basic Course (WOBC). Upon completion of WOBC, the Soldier will be released to their gaining unit to perform in their operational assignment.

The Warrant Officer Cohort is a group of officers that have dedicated their career to being subject matter experts in their field. The WOCAP is looking for motivated, seasoned Soldiers who meet the administrative and technical requirements of their specific MOS, and are ready to share their knowledge and experiences on a larger platform within the Mississippi National Guard.

There are numerous vacancies to fill within the state, with many offering bonuses to traditional Soldiers who transition. We would like to help as many as we can reach their goal in pinning on that "dot."

For more information on what Warrant Officer Specialty your MOS feeds into, visit https://recruiting.army.mil/ISO/AWOR/ARMY_FEEDER/.

Follow the WOCAP program on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/.MSARNGWarrantRecruiting/>.

Begin your journey today!

Contact the MSARNG WO Accession team at:

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WOCAP

WARRANT OFFICER CANDIDATE ACCESSION PROGRAM



WARRANT OFFICERS ARE TECHNICAL EXPERTS, COMBAT LEADERS, TRAINERS AND ADVISORS ROLLED INTO ONE. YOU WILL TAKE YOUR MILITARY AND CIVILIAN EXPERIENCE TO THE NEXT LEVEL WHILE TRAINING OTHERS IN THE PROCESS.

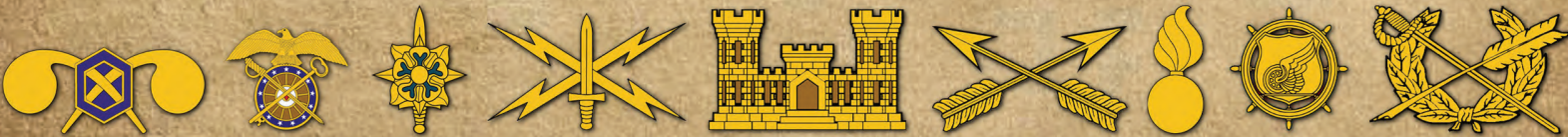
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BURNING QUESTIONS

BONUS PROGRAMS

Maj. Heath Morgigno
JFH-MSNG Education Services Officer

Why do we have bonus programs?

The Bonus program has long been used for all kinds of industries around the world. The ability to pay someone an additional benefit to fill hard-to-recruit jobs are critical to our organization. We compete with other military services and civilian organizations to keep our talent every year. That is why our organizational leaders fight to ensure we can offer the best benefits possible.

We process thousands of bonus payments for the Soldiers of the MS Army National Guard. Bonuses are designed to encourage talented individuals to join the team and stay on the team. In the Education office, we work hard every day to make good on these promises to our service members.

What types of bonuses do we offer?

The bonuses are constantly changing to the needs of the organization. We offer a non-prior service enlistment bonus, a prior service enlistment bonus, extension bonus, and a commissioning bonus for both officer and warrant officer programs. The National Guard Bureau let's each state request a "critical list" of the MOSs that need to be incentivized every quarter and annually. This comes from input from the field and the Recruiting and Retention Battalion. Service members must keep in mind that the list changes often, so before you decide to have a break in service, be aware that it could have big impacts on your benefits: A change in the retirement system, loss of insurance benefits, changing re-entry medical requirements, and potentially having to go back through a training process could keep you from returning.

How long does it take to actually get the bonus money?

Roughly 120 days, if everything is good to go. The bonus process is a combination of the Soldier, Recruiter, the Unit, the Education Office, NGB, and DFAS. When a system was down from October 2018 to February 2019, it created a massive backlog. Now we throw in the complications associated with a new system and it becomes even more convoluted. So we are working diligently with G1 and unit leadership to correct these issues ASAP. Our goal is to ensure those people that are hung up in a system issue are taken care of as well as everyone else. The most common reasons contracts are rejected or delayed include a unit designation change, Army Physical Fitness Test failure, military occupational change, or the service member is flagged for another reason.



What can the Soldier do to ensure they get their bonus on time?

The biggest impact a Soldier can have on their bonus is ensuring those things they can control are correct - APFT passed, save a copy of your incentives contract so you can reference it for information, records review with Readiness NCOs, and understanding the basic flow of how the bonus is processed. If you received your first bonus payment and you are not aware of when your next one is, ask your fulltime staff to look into the system. It will tell you when your next payment is due. Put that date in your phone and follow-up with your fulltime staff three months out from that date. Incorrect records are one of the largest hurdles for bonus payments.

For more information contact:

Maj. Heath Morgigno
JFH-MSNG Education Services Officer
601.313.6300

Scroll:

A silver scroll bearing the words "Army" and "Air" represents the joint force.

Trident:

Neptune's Trident is symbolic of the great Mississippi River. Neptune in Roman mythology, also identified as Poseidon in Greek mythology, is known as the "Father of Waters."

Inner Field:

The inner field of blue is the ceremonial color of the Army.

Stars:

The two stars under the Eagle's wings represent the Adjutant General of Mississippi's rank of Major General.

Eagle:

The Eagle, holding an olive branch in his dexter talon and a bundle of three (3) arrows in his sinister talon, denotes a desire for peace but preparedness for war.

Motto:

"Virtute et Armis" is the motto of the State of Mississippi, meaning "By Valor and Arms."

Outer Field:

The outer field of blue represents the Air Force.

Shield:

The shield is symbolic of "The Great Seal of the State of Mississippi" covering the heart of the Eagle. The Concord Minuteman, a traditional symbol of the Militia, stands within this shield, honoring the legacy of the "Citizen Soldier."

