

SPRING 2017

# GUARD DETAIL★

A CHRONICLE OF THE MISSISSIPPI ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD

## **ALWAYS READY, ALWAYS THERE**

**Citizen Soldiers respond to  
EF3 tornado in their own  
community 8**



**AIRMEN BLAZE TRAIL AT BWC 14 | GUARDSMAN VOICE OF HOPE 10**

# FEATURES



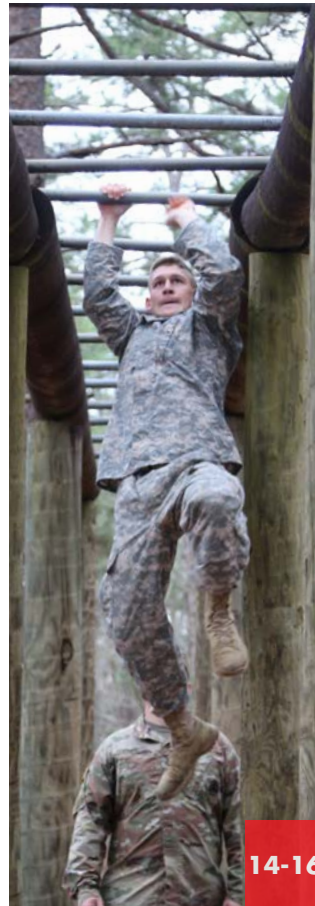
## Voice of Hope

Mississippi Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Stephanie Kennett is named the 2017 National Guard Sexual Assault Response Coordinator.



## Soldiers & Airmen Join Forces

Soldiers and Airmen of Mississippi National Guard disaster response units train with local and state agencies to learn to respond to threats from weapons of mass destruction.



## Best Warriors Compete

Mississippi Army and Air National Guardsmen compete for the title of Soldier of the Year and Non-commissioned Officer of the Year during the 2017 Best Warrior Competition at Camp McCain.



## Fitness Goals

Health and Fitness are crucial to the readiness of today's military forces. 1st Sgt. John Melson shares workout tips to improve your fitness routine and reach your goals.

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**COVER PHOTO:** STAFF SGT. TIM MORGAN  
JFH-MS PUBLIC AFFAIRS

# Letter From THE EDITOR

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## REMEMBERING TOP...



Saturday, March 18, 2017, at around 1 p.m., I was traveling to Jackson from Camp McCain after completing pistol qualification with the Joint Force Headquarters. I received a phone call from Mrs. Scquita Jones, the wife of 1st Sgt. (Ret.) Willie “Floyd” Jones, formerly of Jackson’s 102d Public Affairs Detachment. I pulled over at the nearest rest area.

“Floyd just passed away,” she said with a tremble in her voice. “We’re here with him now at the Veterans Affairs Hospital in Jackson.”

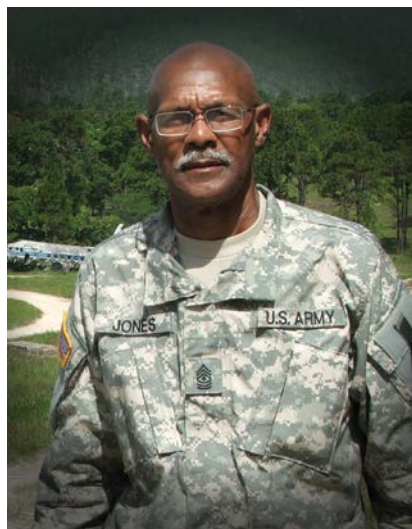
The news was devastating. First Sgt. Jones was a larger than life figure in the Mississippi National Guard public affairs community and my life for many years. He joined the 102d Public Affairs Detachment in 1974 and served as the unit’s top non-commissioned officer from 1986 until his retirement in 2007. He was a talented photographer and a strong NCO with a powerful command presence.

Prior to his death, I had known Floyd since I joined the National Guard in 1994 at 18 years old. We deployed to Bosnia together in 2000, Normandy, France briefly in 2004, Kosovo for almost all of 2005, and Tegucigalpa, Honduras in 2007. I have tons of memories of our service together and wish that I had another opportunity to thank him for helping me get to where I am today.

As you read this issue, remember the “Floyds” in your lives. Cherish the time with those mother and father figures in your formations. Visit the old school Soldiers and Airmen that helped you progress personally and professionally. Keep their spirits alive in your units, and say, “thanks again” before time expires...

Rest easy Floyd...f5.6 and be there

Lt. Col. Christian Patterson, APR+M  
Editor-in Chief



1st Sgt. (Ret.) Willie “Floyd” Jones  
1947 - 2017





**TRENDING**







Mississippi Air National Guard Col. Mike Nabors is greeted by his mother after taking his final flight on a 186th Air Refueling Wing KC-135 Stratotanker at Key Field Air National Guard Base, Meridian, Miss., March 22, 2017. Nabors is retiring after 25 years as a federal civil service technician and will serve as the full-time state assistant to the adjutant general for Mississippi. (Mississippi Air National Guard photo by Staff. Sgt. Jessica Fielder)



Use the QR code here to check out the 2017 Spring edition of the Mississippi Minuteman news broadcast.



## Major General

# William O. Hill

Fellow Guardsmen,

I don't know anyone who would deny that our most valuable resource is our members, for it is impossible to accomplish any mission without them. And since we recognize this fact, the Department of Defense devotes tremendous resources to training and equipping the greatest military ever assembled. How quickly this resource becomes wasted when one of our member's problems results in an early departure from service. As personal problems mount, distractions from the task at hand can result in a personal or team member's injury. Worse yet, perhaps the member decides he/she can no longer handle the stresses of life and commits suicide; an irreplaceable loss to all.

After over a decade of continued military conflict, our Airmen and Soldiers are faced with both sustained and considerable stressors which directly impact readiness. It is therefore essential that all leaders recognize the importance of developing resilient warriors who are ready to accomplish their mission in any environment. This involves a change in our approach to how we maintain the fitness and resiliency of the organization. In the past we concentrated on the technical, war fighting skills and to some degree neglected the stressors resulting from the non-military environment. However, with sustained operations and an increased deployment tempo, we must promote all attributes of personal readiness as it is congruent to unit readiness.

The Air Force's Comprehensive Airman Fitness Framework, the National Guard

Bureau's Pillars of Wellness and the Army's Ready and Resilient (R2) Strategic Framework have a common thread - to increase awareness of the overall health and deployability of our personnel. These programs promote physical, spiritual, social/family and mental/psychological wellness. No leader would argue the applicability of these facets, but few believe they possess the necessary skills to assess his/her subordinates' personal readiness in these areas. Or do we? The answer is simple - involvement. It is imperative leaders and supervisors engage with their subordinates and peers on a personal level and intervene, counsel or direct to the appropriate resources as needed. We're all familiar with the mantra "Mission First, People Always." The statements are complementary... not competing. The training and personal interactions with our people develop cohesion, unity and the foundation of trust which enables mission accomplishment. As stated at the beginning, without our people, there is no mission.

Our units have an outstanding reputation for exceeding mission requirements. However, this cannot ever be expected, nor was it ever designed to be, at the expense of our members. We are blessed in serving with some of the finest military personnel in the world. They deserve our engaged involvement and commitment to their well-being.

Shoulder to Shoulder!

Maj. Gen. William O. Hill  
Assistant Adjutant General  
- Air  
Mississippi National Guard



## Sergeant Major

# Alicia D. Gates

Many factors positively and negatively affect a non-commissioned officer's career progression. Both the Non-commissioned Officer Evaluation Report and the Army Physical Fitness Test act as powerful influences as it relates to an NCO's future. Army evaluations and physical preparedness are major cornerstones in effective personnel management and retention, which are necessary to meet the demands of the Mississippi Army National Guard. These tools help to ensure our Soldiers are prepared to elevate to higher responsibility, and the right Soldiers are being retained for further service.

An NCOER evaluation can impact decisions made within promotion boards, hiring boards and retention boards. If completed properly, this report paints a picture of the rated NCO's characteristics as it relates to leadership, dependability, commitment, competency and enthusiasm. The evaluation forces communication between the leader and subordinate NCO, enabling feedback centered on mentorship, expectation and accomplishments. This is an opportunity for leaders to strengthen their subordinates and for the NCO to gain insight and knowledge.

Physical fitness is the foundation to a well-prepared and emotionally equipped leader, which is needed to perform the complex and demanding tasks of today's military operations. A fit Soldier is a prepared Soldier. Unfit Soldiers have a more difficult time meeting the physical and emotional demands of today's warfighters. Leaders at every level are responsible for the fitness level of their subordinates, which

should be transparent by the propagation of command emphasis programs, training schedules and ample opportunity in times of high operational tempo.

The readiness level of our military force is fueled by leadership involvement and Soldier accountability. Evaluations and personnel fitness are responsibilities shared by all parties involved. Both areas impact our state and nation's level of readiness because we must be prepared to lead, sustain and respond to matters at the local and national levels. Leaders must prepare future leaders to meet our military operational requirements. This is generated at the most basic level through mentoring and evaluating our current force while emphasizing the necessity of maintaining a physically fit force capable of responding to the call of war.

Sgt. Maj. Alicia D. Gates  
G1 Operations Sergeant Major  
Mississippi Army National Guard



# Versatility at its Best

## MSNG Support Crosses State Lines

Below - Mississippi Air National Guard Staff Sgt. Nick Moore, with the 186th Air Refueling Wing, operates the boom on the back of a KC-135 Stratotanker while refueling an F-16 from the 138th Fighter Wing over the Gulf of Mexico, Feb. 1, 2017, providing support to the 2017 Super Bowl. (Photo by Mark Mulligan, Houston Chronicle)

Story by Staff Sgt. Tim Morgan  
JFH-MS Public Affairs

The past four months demonstrate how the Mississippi National Guard continues to evolve and adapt to missions and requirements.

A busy second quarter for the MSNG saw the 58th Presidential Inauguration, Airmen providing air-refueling support to F-16 Fighting Falcons training to protect the skies over Super Bowl LI, disaster relief in Southern Mississippi, and the transformation of Gulfport's Combat Readiness Training Center to a Battlefield Airmen Center.

### INAUGURATION

In January, approximately 150 Mississippi Guardsmen boarded C-17 Globemasters at the 172d Airlift Wing in Flowood, Mississippi, and flew to Washington D.C. to assist local authorities with traffic control, crowd management, communications and chaplain support operations in support of the presidential inauguration.

"It was an honor and very humbling," said Senior Airman Lauren Salazar, 186th Security Forces Squadron, as she described being sworn in as a special police officer during a ceremony with D.C. policemen. "I've never sworn into anything besides the military."

The MSNG has participated in previous presidential inaugurations, and historically the military has been a part of every ceremony since George Washington's ceremony in 1798.

### SUPER BOWL SECURITY

While MSNG military police and security forces were in D.C., Guardsmen supported other missions, such as protecting America's largest sporting event, the Super Bowl, from threats in the skies.

Members of Meridian's 186th Air Refueling Wing teamed with F-16 pilots during "Falcon Virgo," a training exercise replicating how they would respond if an errant pilot flew into the restricted area







over NRG Stadium in Houston.

"It's the biggest adrenaline rush," said Staff Sgt. Nicholas Moore, a 186th Air Refueling Wing boom operator.

Moore said it requires intense concentration to maneuver a fuel rod into a receiver aircraft during mid-air refueling.

The drill gave F-16 pilots the chance to play out the scenario from start to finish. They were able to identify and intercept an aircraft and escort it to safety, all while staying in the skies for as long as needed, thanks to in-flight refueling from the 186th.

## TORNADO

Apart from responding to threats, Guardsmen at home answered the call to assist the state when a deadly tornado swept across Southern Mississippi January 21. The severe weather damaged more than 1,200 homes in eight counties and left four people dead, according to the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency.

"It's devastating," said Sgt. Christian Cowler, a Soldier assigned to the 3656th Maintenance Company, 184th Sustainment Command. "Hattiesburg and Petal are my home."

The 3656th Maintenance Company was conducting drill the weekend the EF3 tornado struck and were one of the first units out of the 184th SC to respond. Staff Sgt. Michael Clark, Detachment 1, 3656th Maintenance Co. squad leader, said his team was shocked to see the devastation they encountered when tasked to assist Hattiesburg.

"It was awful," Clark recalled. "You'd have one house standing, and then at the next door neighbor's house there would be nothing but a slab left. It's hard to fathom how we only lost four lives."

Clark's unit spent the first day assisting law enforcement with roving patrols and security check points. They ensured only essential personnel such as emergency and search crews were allowed through disaster areas.

"Whatever the police department needed, we were there for," said Clark.

The tornado's aftermath was not foreign to Clark,

Soldiers of the 3656th Maintenance Company, 184th Sustainment Command, assist Hattiesburg, Miss., residents with clean-up efforts in the aftermath of an EF3 tornado that swept through Southern Mississippi Jan. 21, 2017. (Photos by Staff Sgt. Tim Morgan, JFH-MS Public Affairs)

Right - Mississippi National Guard Soldiers and Airmen prepare to board C-17 Globemaster aircrafts at the 172d Airlift Wing, Flowood, Miss., to provide support to the 58th presidential inauguration in January, 2017. (Photo by 2nd Lt. Terry Hill, JFH-MS Public Affairs)

having witnessed and assisted in the MSNG recovery operations during Hurricane Katrina. He said he could relate with the victims, remembering when his family's home suffered \$56K worth of damage from the catastrophe in 2005.

He said what made the current disaster unique was the manner in which it came.

"This struck like a thief in the night," said Clark. "No one knew it was coming until it was here."

Many residents did not have a home to come back to, but they said having the National Guard around to assist helps them look forward with hope as they pick up the pieces.

"We just want to give thanks to all of y'all," said Jimmy Welch, a Hattiesburg resident who lost his home. "It means a lot."

## BATTLEFIELD AIRMEN CENTER

Meanwhile, the Mississippi Air National Guard made a significant change.

Mississippi's Gulfport Combat Readiness Training Center is now known as the Battlefield Airmen Center. The name change came with the U.S. Air National Guard's new mission focus for the training center.

The BAC's primary mission is to ensure that Battlefield Airmen are "always ready" to support both global contingency operations and stateside domestic responses. It will provide a unique, realistic, cross-domain training venue where Battlefield Airmen can enhance their combat skills prior to embarking anywhere in the world. They serve in a career field that integrates with operational ground forces.

"When Battlefield Airmen deploy, they integrate with conventional forces and Special Operations Forces. We never want that partnership to be initially forged while in combat," said Col. Paul Drake, Battlefield Airmen Center commander. "It should be done before going into harm's way. We in Gulfport want to provide the venue where these operators train like they fight, so they can fight like they train."

Air National Guard leaders say the BAC will produce trained and ready operational forces through increased training opportunities with joint and international partners in South Mississippi.

# Guardisman Praised as Voice of Hope

## SPECIAL TO THE GUARD DETAIL: Kennett Awarded 2017 Sexual Assault Response Coordinator

The Mississippi National Guard takes great pride in the ambition, diligence and dedicated contributions of its Service members in support of missions across the globe and throughout our great state.

Mississippi Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Stephanie Kennett is one of those outstanding Service members who has set the standard for excellence in the National Guard through her selfless service and dedication to duty.

Kennett was recognized as the 2017 Department of Defense Exceptional Sexual Assault Response Coordinator for the National Guard April 5, at the Pentagon by acting Secretary of the Army, The Honorable Robert Speer, and at the National Guard Bureau, Arlington, Virginia, April 6, by Col. Robert Charlesworth, NGB Chief of Staff.

This valiant award recognition ceremony came with impeccable timing as Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant initiated a proclamation April 4, at the MSNG Joint Force Headquarters, declaring the month of April the MSNG Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month.

This year's motto, "Protecting our People Protects our Mission," provides focus, while Kennett serves as a voice of hope to Service member sexual assault survivors.

"I am truly humbled and honored to be recognized for this award and to represent the Mississippi National Guard as we offer compassion and hope to survivors while implementing preventative measures to stop acts of sexual assault in our ranks," said Kennett.

Kennett serves as a state victim advocate coordinator at the MSNG JFH. She simultaneously filled the vacant role of sexual assault response coordinator the entirety of 2016.

"I am very proud of the work Sgt. 1st Class Kennett has done to support the Service members of the Mississippi National Guard," said Lt. Col. Deidre Smith, Director of MSNG Outreach Services. "Her commitment for primary prevention of sexual assault has made an incredible impact within our military ranks and the entire state."

Kennett continues to synchronize the efforts of community organizations aimed at preventing sexual assault and domestic violence.

Kennett has developed innovative non-traditional sexual assault prevention training to join forces with the Mississippi Law Enforcement Officer Training Academy, the Military Sex-

ual Trauma Team at the Mississippi Veteran's Affairs Hospital, the Victim Compensation Office at the Attorney General's Office, and the Office Against Interpersonal Violence at the Mississippi Health Department.

This unique joint training presents a capstone in training excellence and joining community forces. Her efforts provide testimony to Kennett's versatility and competence as a leader within the sexual assault prevention community.

Kennett is part of the dynamic MSNG Outreach Services team that has recently developed a new and innovative approach to provide resources and immediate assistance to survivors, Soldiers, leaders, and Family members - the MSNG Outreach Services mobile app. The app, which first launched December 2016, serves as a one-stop shop for information, resources and immediate assistance.

"The Mississippi National Guard Outreach Services Mobile App is just the type of innovative approach that truly sets the standard of excellence in Service member and Family support," said Smith.

The MSNG Outreach Services app is available for download at the Apple App Store and Google Play for smartphones and various other electronic devices.



Sgt. 1st Class Stephanie Kennett (center) accepts her award presented by (from left to right) Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel A. Daley, Acting Secretary of the Army The Honorable Robert Speer, Director of the Army Staff Lt. Gen. Gary H. Cheek, and U.S. Army Sexual Assault Response Prevention Program Director Ms. Monique Ferrell.



Sgt. 1st Class Stephanie Kennett meets Gen. Joseph L. Lengyel, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, during her visit to the Pentagon April 5, 2017.





# MS National Guard Outreach Services Mobile App

Your one-stop-shop for Information and Resources to support MSNG Service Members and their Families.

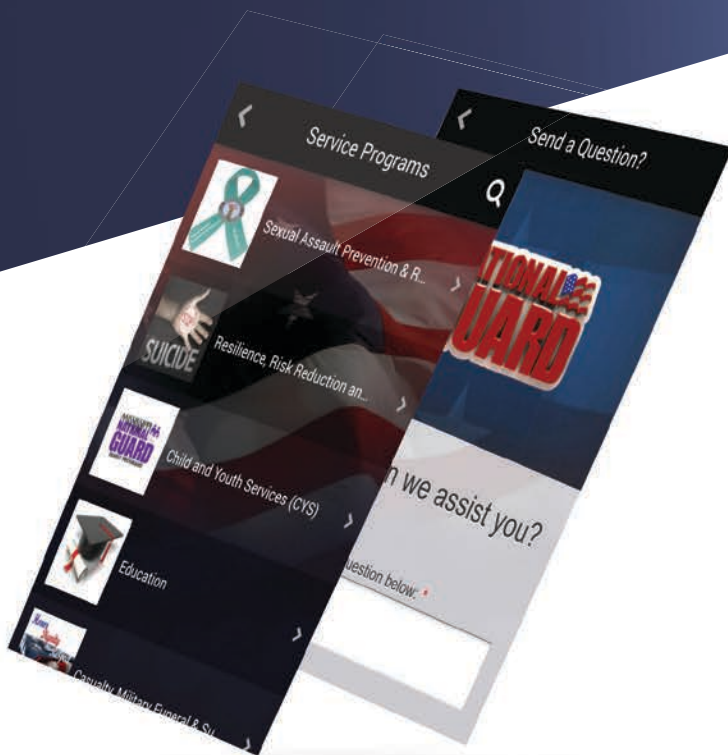
Lending a helping hand to assist Mississippi National Guard Service Members and their Families.



Available on the iPhone  
**App Store**



ANDROID APP ON  
**Google play**



## Outreach Services Programs and more

### Suicide Prevention

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

### SARC/SHARP

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

### Family Assistance

To assist Family Readiness Groups and their Families to cope with strains associated with unit deployment and emergencies.

### Education

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

**DOWNLOAD**  
from App Store





Airman 1st Class Tyler Fleming and Staff Sgt. Matthew Eaves of the 186th Air Refueling Wing test their equipment prior to responding to possible weapons of mass destruction during the joint exercise. (Photo by Danielle Thomas, Battlefield Airmen Center Public Affairs)



Members of the 209th Special Operations Civil Engineer Squadron dispose of hazardous material during the joint training Exercise Marlinspike II April 3-6, 2017 in Gulfport, Miss. (Photo by Private 1st Class Micha Longmire, 102d Public Affairs Detachment)

# Unified Response

**"We love that connection between Air and Army. We love being able to show our joint ability to work together." - Senior Master Sgt. Brian Hernstrom, 209th Special Operations Civil Engineer Squadron**

## Marlinspike Exercise Enhances Interagency Coordination

Story by Danielle Thomas  
Battlefield Airmen Center Public Affairs

The Mississippi National Guard's 47th Civil Support Team conducted a large-scale, multi-agency training event, Exercise Marlinspike II, April 3-6, 2017, from the Battlefield Airmen Center in Gulfport, Mississippi, bringing Guardsmen and 31 federal and state agencies together across several coastal locations.

Unlike many similar exercises, Marlinspike II participants are not told the scenario they will face until shortly before having to respond. Civil Support Team leaders said this creates the need for on-the-spot personnel, equipment and strategy decisions and teaches techniques for solving complex problems.

In one scenario, an FBI Special Weapons and Tactics team raided a Hancock County warehouse and came across unknown substances.

The Mississippi Air National Guard's expertise in Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear detection played a significant role in these types of scenarios dealing with threats from weapons of mass destruction.

Airmen in the emergency management field of the 186th Air Refueling Wing, headquartered in Meridian, Mississippi,

served on a team called in to determine if the items discovered were WMDs. The Airmen utilized their personal protective equipment to maintain the highest level of caution.

"We entered with an all hazards approach," said MSANG Senior Master Sgt. Christopher Dickerson, 186th Air Refueling Wing emergency manager. "We utilized various types of equipment that allows you to identify substances that are liquids or powders. We also have instruments that detect radiation levels and gases."

In another Harrison County scenario, the 209th Special Operations Civil Engineer Squadron, headquartered in Gulfport, boarded a vessel to determine the nature of a substance found by federal agents who stormed a boat to free hostages.

Due to being on the water, having to navigate stairs, and no previous occupants displaying symptoms of illness, 209th leaders decided to use a scaled down version of their protective gear, donning only their chemical resistant Tyvek suits and masks.

"It gave us a chance to read the situation and make decisions. For me as a senior leader, that's an awesome opportunity," said MSANG Senior Master Sgt. Brian Hernstrom, 209th SOCES emergency management flight superintendent.

Airmen described Marlinspike II as "very real world" because it calls for responders to arrive at a site not knowing what to expect, promotes the use of joint communication to coordinate with other agencies, and ensures the most efficient and effective response.





upfront, when there's no pressure and no stress, than in a situation."

Building those relationships was a main focus of the exercise, said Daniel Ward, director of training and integrated systems for USM's National Center for Spectator Sports Safety and Security, also known as NCS4, which hosted the event.

"For us, we haven't had a lot of exposure to the National Guard and their capabilities so it's extremely important for us to work with them to learn and understand what capabilities they bring and how they can help us in enhancing our overall preparedness," Ward said. "We're exercising our community response capabilities to a radiological incident. It's something that hasn't been exercised or discussed often enough in the sports safety security industry."

NCS4 was established by USM in 2006 in response to the 9/11 terrorist attack and the Department of Homeland Security's identification of sports venues as soft targets for subsequent attacks. Its goal is to address the evolving security challenges of the U.S. sports industry through innovative research, quality training and enhanced professional development.

"We've been planning for things such as bomb detection and active shooter, but today we added that radiation aspect and it taught me so much of what I need to do to take our plan even further – the contacts I need to make, what I need to do in planning for early detection and prevention and what to do if we find some type of radiation isotope," said Rusty Keyes, commander of detectives for the USM Police Department. "I've been in law enforcement for 28 years and I probably learned more today than I have in the last five."

## 47th CST Leads USM Radiological Exercise

The 47th Civil Support Team assisted local and state agencies by providing initial advice on prevention and agent determination as well as leading first responders through the detection assessment process.

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Scott Tynes  
102d Public Affairs Detachment

In order to help prepare the University of Southern Mississippi and the Hattiesburg area for a radiological threat, the Mississippi National Guard participated with local, state and federal agencies in an exercise at the college January 17-18, 2017.

The event centered on preparing for an incident and then responding to the threat of a radiological attack on the university's M.M. Roberts Stadium. The Mississippi Department of Health provided harmless live samples of a radioactive isotope and hid them at several locations in the stadium. First responders were tasked with locating and identifying the threat as well as safe removal.

The 47th Civil Support Team, the Flowood-based response team for emergencies or terrorist events that involve weapons of mass destruction or toxic industrial chemicals, assisted the agencies during the exercise by providing initial advice on prevention and agent determination as well as leading first responders through the detection assessment process.

"The relationship that we build with local first responders and security at these sporting venues is critical," said Capt. Heath Morgigno, operations officer for the CST. When they need somebody and they have an issue, it's better to have learned

Army National Guard Sgt. Christopher Easterling of the Mississippi National Guard's 47th Civil Support Team explains the readings on radiation source detection equipment to Brandon Bell and Matt Bayley of the Hattiesburg Fire Department. Staff Sgt. John Dennis, Search Team Bravo non-commissioned officer-in-charge, looks on during a radiological threat and response exercise at the University of Southern Mississippi's M.M. Roberts Stadium, Jan. 17 and 18, 2017. The joint exercise also included other university, local, state, regional and federal agencies.







Mississippi Army National Guard Sgt. Marc Doss completes a 12-mile ruck march at the Camp McCain Training Center near Elliott, Miss., March 8, 2017, during the 2017 Best Warrior Competition. Sergeant Doss claimed the title of Non-commissioned Officer of the Year.

# Doss claims title - “Best Warrior”

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Scott Tynes  
102d Public Affairs Detachment

A veteran of the contest, Sgt. Marc Doss came to Camp McCain March 6 - 10, 2017, for the 2017 Mississippi National Guard Best Warrior Competition with one goal – to win.

The Company B, 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry Regiment non-commissioned officer returned to the multi-faceted Soldiers’ competition with a new strategy and a singular focus to push himself to his physical and mental limits.

Doss said he did pretty well in the 2016 competition, but “had a lot of room for improvement.” He trained harder between events by ruck marching, running and followed a more targeted gym routine.

“I feel a lot more confident,” Doss said before the start of the competition. “I feel like I’m a lot more prepared than last year and I know what’s coming to me now. I also have a better mindset this year. I’m not as nervous.”

The additional training paid off. Doss claimed the title of 2017 Best Warrior Competition Non-commissioned Officer of the Year, and will represent Mississippi’s NCOs at the Southeast Regional competition in Kentucky with a chance to advance to the nationals.

Specialist Stanley Powell, 1st Battalion, 204th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, claimed the title of Soldier of the Year, at the same event, and will represent E-4s and below at regionals. The winners of the competition were announced April 22, 2017 at the NCO Association Conference

banquet.

Doss said that although he worked hard for the selection, he was still surprised and pleased to be selected.

“I’m excited,” Doss said. “I really wasn’t expecting it. I didn’t think I won.”

The Jackson County Sheriff’s Deputy had doubts throughout the competition. He said the event was even harder this year. It also featured the emergence of the Mississippi Air National Guard competing for the first time.

He hoped lessons he learned last year about the events would carry him past his mainly rookie competitors. Many of those lessons were applied the first day, which began with a standard Army Physical Fitness Test that rolled into a 5K run.

“I have a different strategy than last year,” he said. “I’m going to run my two miles as hard as I can and not worry about the 5K as much. I tried to save myself for the 5K last year and it lowered my APFT score.”

As the drizzle that fell upon the APFT turned into a torrential downpour, the competitors prepared for the next event of the day – a land navigation course that Doss said really hurt him in the previous competition.

“It was a disaster last year,” Doss said. “I was trying to keep up with the competition, so I missed three plot points and came in after time expired.”

That meant he received no points for the event. Points only count if the competitor comes in before time expires.

“Even if you don’t win on time, but you get the most amount of correct plots, you can still win on points,” Doss said.





ned Officer of the Year during the event.

Drenched and tired, the competitors then had to display their knowledge of several Army Warrior Tasks, such as call for artillery fire/close air support and timed weapons disassembly and reassembly, that went late into the night.

Night still covered the camp like a shroud as the 17 competitors shouldered their 40 lb. rucksacks for the expected march to the rifle range, but more surprises lay in wait when it was announced the timed event had been increased to 12 miles.

"I came into it thinking it was going to be six miles again, so I was shocked," Doss said. "I had been training for six. About mile six I started really cramping. You really just have to push through the pain. That's the main thing to winning this competition."

Doss was one of seven competitors to complete the ruck march under time. Despite his finish, he still felt he was trailing in total points.

"I know I'm not in the lead right now, but I'll use that to push harder through the rest of the events," he said.

The last day was a crucible of physical and mental toughness. Already exhausted from two grueling days, the competitors were confronted with yet another physically-taxing timed event in the confidence course.

"I'm really honored that my unit has the confidence in me to encourage me to do this. And that, of all the NCOs in the unit, they saw me fit to be here," Doss said. "I'm trying to win this state competition so I can go on to regionals."

The infantryman said when he takes the stage with Powell at the NCOA convention, he expects the experience to be emotional.

"I may tear up a little bit. This will be my last year – win or lose. I want to open this experience up to other Soldiers."



Private 1st Class Debra Pope, representing the Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, Hattiesburg, Miss., maneuvers across the rope bridge during the competition's confidence course event. The Best Warrior Competition is a three-day event designed to test Soldiers' physical and mental endurance.



Sgt. Marc Doss, the 2017 Non-commissioned Officer of the Year, fires a 9mm pistol during the event's stress shoot. The stress shoot is a timed event composed of several warrior tasks strung together to test a Soldier's ability to react under pressure.



Spc. Stanley Powell, 1st Battalion, 204th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, based in Canton, Miss., conducts a 12-mile ruck march during the competition. Powell claimed the title of Soldier of the Year at this year's competition.





## Unfamiliar Skies: Airmen Compete for Best Warrior

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Scott Tynes  
102d Public Affairs Detachment

Above - Master Sgt. Mitch Kaiser, representing Gulfport's Battlefield Airmen Center, navigates the low crawl obstacle on the confidence course portion of the competition. This is Kaiser's first time competing in the competition.

Below - Senior Airman Andrew Sclafani, representing Gulfport's Battlefield Airmen Center, finishes strong in the 12-mile ruck march during the Mississippi National Guard's 2017 Best Warrior Competition. This year's competition marked the first time the state's Air National Guard has competed in the event.



They came to the Mississippi Army National Guard's 2017 Best Warrior Competition to challenge themselves, and in the process changed the perception some Soldiers have of Airmen on the battlefield.

Master Sgt. Mitch Kaiser, a munitions accountable systems officer who also works in finance, and Senior Airman Andrew Sclafani, who works in cybertransport and cybersecurity, left their desks at the Battlefield Airmen Center to become the first Mississippi Air National Guardsmen to compete in a competition that determines the state's top combat warfighters.

From the start, they were greeted enthusiastically, but with reservations. Despite his penchant for endurance events like marathons and triathlons, biking and swimming, Kaiser said the doubts were not limited to the Soldiers.

"To be honest, when I first got here I thought I would be last," Kaiser said. "I haven't done anything like this since basic training, but I've done pretty well in some of the events. I'll be happy if I can impress these guys that the Air Force guys can hang with them in some of these events - earn their respect."

Private 1st Class Debra Pope, a competitor representing the Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, said the Airmen accomplished their mission.

"They broke the stereotype," she said. "They did very well."

The Airmen said there was a strong sense of camaraderie prevalent throughout the competition. Soldiers often helped them prepare for events and talked them

through some of the more Army-specific types of training.

The competition is a grueling series of events set over three days designed to test every physical and mental facet of a Soldier, including a physical fitness test, 5K run, 12-mile ruck march, land navigation, weapons qualification, a lengthy confidence course, exam and essay, appearance before a board and other advanced warrior tasks.

"The ruck was the hardest," Sclafani said. "It's something I've never done before. It was about five miles more than I've ever walked at one time before. Now I expect more from myself. I'm more confident. I've learned 'I can't' usually means 'I can.'"

Command Chief Master Sgt. Robbie Knight, state command chief of the Mississippi Air National Guard, said to expect to win the competition the first year is "perhaps shooting for the moon," but was excited about the showing of his Airmen.

"I think sometimes you look at an Airman and you think they're maybe a little bit on the weaker side of our Soldiers," Knight said. "We do train (physically) hard too, but probably not to the extent that (Soldiers) do on a daily basis. It's good to have our Airmen and our Soldiers working together because we have the same ultimate goal and that's taking care of our nation's defense."

Neither Airman was selected to represent the state at the Southeast Regionals for the chance to attend Nationals this year, but Kaiser and Sclafani said they would be more prepared next year.

"Now I know what to expect and I've got the fire," Kaiser said.



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## #FitnessGoals

Story by 1st Sgt. John B. Melson  
1st Battalion, 155th Infantry Regiment

A key role in unit readiness and the ability to be an effective member of a team is maintaining a level of fitness to remain functional and operational. It is not, and should not, be viewed as a nuisance or in a negative manner.

As Soldiers and Airmen, our job can at times be very physically demanding. A shortfall we have as an organization is that we primarily focus on the annual physical fitness test events. To train specifically for just the test events will not properly prepare Soldiers and Airmen for rigorous training and what may be encountered on the battlefield.

I have found during my career, which has been extremely physically demanding, that staying on top of physical fitness has played a very big role in my success, as well as my survivability. Prior to joining the Army National Guard, I was diagnosed with cancer. I had a very regular fitness regimen. Doctors claim that how it conditioned my body played a pivotal role in my recovery. Also, I have found that when dealing with stress, exercising has given me a healthy outlet.

The featured training techniques are proven to work, and I personally use them in my training regimen. They have helped me prepare to attend some of the most physically demanding training the military has to offer. I am also better physically prepared to deploy and lead by example for my fellow military members.

## High Intensity Interval Training

Establish 8 stations. Execute each station for one minute. Take short rests in between stations. Conduct circuits at least once a week. Increase intensity by adding weights or increasing speed.

\*HIT raises heart rate levels, causing more fat-burning and cardiovascular improvement.

### 1 Push-ups



### 5 Sit-ups



### 2 Box Steps/Jumps



### 6 Shoulder Press Kettlebell



### 3 Pull-ups



### 7 Air Squats



### 4 Forward Lunge



### 8 Ammo Can Carry



\*HIIT raises heart rate levels, causing more fat-burning and cardiovascular improvement.



# Armed Forces Museum Breaks Ground for New Gold Star Family Monument



forgotten, so this is for them.”

Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant said while Mississippi’s fallen heroes already have monuments to honor their sacrifices, this one pays tribute to those who have felt that loss the most.

“Whether it was in World War I or the war on terror, Mississippi has a number of Gold Star Families,” he said. “We want to honor them. This memorial will be here for generations making sure we honor their sacrifices.”

The black granite monument is scheduled to be erected in front of the museum later this year. The front will bear the words “Gold Star Families Memorial Monument, a tribute to Gold Star mothers, fathers, and relatives who have sacrificed a loved one for our freedom.”

The other side will tell a story through four granite panels highlighting homeland, family, patriotism and sacrifice.

“It is important to us that we never forget the sacrifices that were made for our freedoms, and this memorial will do just that - help us remember,” said Bryant.

According to the Hershel “Woody” Williams Foundation, 17 memorials have been built in the Northern and Eastern states. More than 30 monuments, including the one at Camp Shelby, are in progress nationally. Other memorials are envisioned in the Northern, central, and Southern areas of Mississippi.

“There is nothing like this in Mississippi,” Jenny Smith said. “It is very important that it’s here at Camp Shelby because there is a lot of traffic here. A lot of Soldiers train here and a lot of young people who come through the museum and can learn what a Gold Star Family is.”

The Hershel “Woody” Williams Foundation donated \$5,000 to the memorial tribute. The foundation is a non-profit organization founded by Hershel W. Williams, a Medal of Honor recipient from the battle of Iwo Jima in World War II.

Its goal is to honor Gold Star Families, relatives and Gold Star Children, by establishing memorial monuments in communities throughout the country and to provide scholarships to the families of the fallen.



Above - The Adjutant General of Mississippi Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles breaks ground with Miss. Gov. Phil Bryant, Camp Shelby Commander Col. Gregory Michel and other community members Jan. 11, 2017, at the Mississippi Armed Forces Museum at Camp Shelby, Miss.

Right - The Gold Star Memorial Monument depicted here is scheduled to be erected at the Mississippi Armed Forces Museum later this year.

January 11, 2017. The monument is the first of its kind in the state.

“This is a well-deserved memory for Gold Star Families and Mothers,” said George Cain, Army Survivor Outreach Services Program coordinator. “I think this is a tremendous testimony to the

memory of those who have served us so well.”

Gold Star Families are those who lost a loved one in military service. The gold star designation dates back to World War I when families would display a blue star for a loved one serving in the war. A gold star replaced it if they were killed in combat.

Mississippi Gold Star Families were the guests of honor during the ceremony. Among them were Eddie and Jenny Smith, of Brandon, Mississippi, who lost their son, Marine Staff Sgt. Jason Rogers, in Afghanistan in April 2011.

“(Gold Star Families) can come here and reflect on the sacrifices of their loved ones,” Jenny said. “A lot of times those family members are

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

Mississippi’s fallen heroes already have monuments to honor their sacrifices. This one pays tribute to those who felt that loss the most.

A Gold Star Families Memorial Monument honoring the families of Mississippi Service members killed in the line of duty is becoming a reality.

A memorial groundbreaking ceremony was held at the Armed Forces Museum, located at the Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center,









## Missions at a Glance

1. A map of South Mississippi is used to show leaders various areas where troops may be deployed in the event of a hurricane or other natural disaster during the Mississippi National Guard's 2017 Hurricane Exercise at the Battlefield Airmen Center, Gulfport, Miss., April 8, 2017. (Mississippi National Guard photo by Spc. Jovi Prevot, 102d Public Affairs Detachment)
2. Secretary of Defense James Mattis is flown throughout Iraq by Mississippi National Guard Company B, 1-111th General Support Aviation Battalion, headquartered in Meridian, Miss., while visiting the country in February. (Photo by Thomas Watkins/Agency France-Press — Getty Images)
3. Two 186th Air Refueling Wing KC-135 Stratotankers conduct refueling operations during a senior leader visit at Key Air Field, Meridian, Miss., Feb. 22, 2017. Mississippi Army National Guard leaders visited the wing to get a better understanding of the unit's capabilities. (Mississippi National Guard photo by Spc. Christopher Shannon, 102d Public Affairs Detachment)
4. The Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center's environmental department has developed an innovative program to raise endangered gopher tortoises in a hatchery for two years prior to releasing them into the wild to increase their chances of survival. The hatchery houses approximately 200 tortoises at any one given time. (Photo courtesy of Camp Shelby Biologist James Lee)



The figure of Dumbo represents the 183d Airlift Squadron's strategic mission and aircraft classified as "HEAVIES."

The figure of Jiminy Cricket riding on Dumbo's back represents the unit's "can do" attitude and friendly southern hospitality.



The parallel runways next to the southern governor's mansion represent the unit's location in the capital city as well as a tie to the unit's motto - "Wings of the Deep South."

The overall design symbolizes friendship, capability and hospitality and reflects the essence of the unit.

“As we continue to develop our Airmen and expose them to new missions, we’re setting the stage for innovative ideas to flourish,” Maj. Gen. William O. Hill, the assistant adjutant general — air of the Mississippi National Guard.

# Wings of the Deep South

183d Airlift Squadron, Mississippi National Guard



The 183d Airlift Squadron has a rich history dating back to 1953 when it was first organized as a reconnaissance unit. It was converted to its current airlift role in 1957 and has been called to federal service in several operations, including operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm and Just Cause. The squadron has been equipped with the C-17 Globemaster III aircraft since 2003 when it received the first Globemaster III assigned to the Air National Guard, fittingly named the "Spirit of the Minuteman." The unit continues to take on new and diverse missions supporting the command's vision to be the most responsive and resourceful wing on the planet. (Mississippi Air National Guard Photo by Tech. Sgt. Marvin Moore, 172d Airlift Wing)





# BURNING QUESTIONS



Col. Paul Drake is the commander of the Battlefield Airmen Center, a National Training Center in Gulfport, Miss.

## Battlefield Airmen Center Transition

### Col. Paul Drake BAC Commander

**Q1. Who are Battlefield Airmen and what vital roles do they serve within the military?**

**A1.** Battlefield Airmen career fields include: pararescue, combat control, tactical air control and Special Operations weather teams. These Service members, who operate much differently than traditional air forces, integrate with conventional ground forces and Special Operations Forces.

- Pararescue Airmen are personal recovery specialists trained to locate, treat, and recover isolated and injured personnel.

- Combat controllers are assigned to Special Tactics Squadrons and establish assault zones, provide air traffic control in remote locations, call in long-range firepower, and provide command, control, communications and intelligence to the ground force commander.

- Tactical air control party specialists embed in Army and Marine elements to control surface-to-surface and air-to-surface fires to accomplish mission objectives executing operational air and space power.

- Special Operations weather team Airmen provide tactical weather intelligence to the Army and Marine Special Forces units.

**Q2. Why did the Air National Guard decide to create a Battlefield Airmen Center and why was the Gulfport Combat Readiness Training Center chosen as the location?**

**A2.** The ANG decided to create a Battlefield Airmen Center to improve the capacity to meet Battlefield Airmen continuation training needs, especially in advanced skills. Gulfport provides existing infrastructure, airspace and ranges, favorable climate for year-round training, and existing relationships from experience with the joint force. Ultimately, Gulfport provides BA a location for focused training, dedicated assets and prioritized scheduling that enables synergy, consistency and cost savings.

**Q3. What impact will the creation of the ANG BAC mean for the training of Airmen in the Mississippi National Guard?**

**A3.** The creation of an ANG BAC gives Mississippi Air National Guard Airmen the opportunity to establish inter-service relationships, exchange best practices and reap the benefits of ANG and active duty Air Force dedicated resources. This demonstrates the MSNG is not only a vital contributor to the joint force, but also a good steward of taxpayer provided money.

**Q4. What changes will be implemented in the near future and what do you expect over time?**

**A4.** The ANG BA functional area managers are comparing future BAC requirements to existing infrastructure, equipment and manpower. Once this process concludes, an implementation plan will be formulated, vetted and executed.

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One hundred fifty Soldiers and Airmen of the Mississippi National Guard assisted local authorities with traffic control, crowd management, communications and chaplain support operations in support of the 58th presidential inauguration in Washington, D.C. in January, 2017. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Tim Morgan, JFH-MS Public Affairs)

