

# GEORGIA GUARDSMAN



★★ SERVING THE NATIONAL GUARD AND STATE DEFENSE FORCE OF GEORGIA ★★

Q4/ 2019

## THE END OF AN ERA

JSTARS Complete 18-Year Mission With CENTCOM

# Celebrating 25 Years

The State Partnership Program

PLUS: GEORGIA GUARD MEDICS DEPLOY | HONORING AN AMERICAN HERO | AND SO MUCH MORE

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# GEORGIA GUARDSMAN



★★ SERVING THE NATIONAL GUARD AND STATE DEFENSE FORCE OF GEORGIA ★★

## GEORGIA NATIONAL GUARD

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# Georgia Guard's 1-54th SFAB Conducts Team Assessment at Fort Benning, Ga.

**STORY & PHOTOS BY: MAJ. WILLIAM CARRAWAY | PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE |  
GEORGIA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD**

As Georgia citizens sought shelter from the griping cold that seized the state from November 11 to 15, 2019, Georgia's Citizen Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 54th Security Forces Assistance Brigade set out into sub-freezing temperatures for extended field training at Fort Benning. Dubbed Operation Greenhorn, the training tested the Soldiers mettle, skills and will to perform as part of a small team of combat advisors in an austere environment.

The 10 Soldiers who embarked on the training are the first team constituted by the 1-54th SFAB. All have passed a rigorous two-day selection process at Fort Bragg and all are considered experts in their military occupation specialty. Seven different MOS are represented in the team including infantry, military police, signal, medical and explosive ordnance disposal. While each Soldier brought their own individual skills to the field, the intent of the operation was to fuse these skills with the combat patrol skills necessary to ensure team survivability.

Upon arriving at their unit headquarters on Fort Benning, the Soldiers conducted training classes in fieldcraft, patrolling, land navigation and casualty evaluation and treatment before putting the skills to practice in rehearsed actions. Following a day of preparation, the Soldiers received their operations order which called for them move by foot into disputed territory, conduct area reconnaissance and be prepared to work with host nation forces.

The next morning, just after dawn, the team began a six-mile approach march to the training area with full rucksacks and weapon systems. Reaching the training area, the team maneuvered through thick woods and understory using compass and pace count as their primary navigation methods to conduct link up with host nation forces. Nearing the objective, the team's lead scout observed a simulated casualty where the link up was to occur. The team successfully detected an ambush and maneuvered to suppress the enemy, secured the objective and evaluated the casualty. The team quickly rendered aid and extracted the casualty to a casualty evacuation point to complete the first training scenario.

The team was next tasked with the mission of

carrying "resupply" to a nearby village. The resupply consisted of 80 pounds of water, a wooden pole and two tires. The purpose of the exercise was to evaluate how the team analyzed and solved the problem of transporting heavy and bulky items over rough terrain while maintaining security and avoiding detection.

As the day and miles passed by, the team completed several successive missions. The Soldiers performed reconnaissance, negotiated meetings with simulated host-nation civilians and maintained communications with higher command apprising them of conditions on the ground. Responding to a simulated IED strike, the team evaluated two casualties and requested medical evacuation. A UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter of the Ga. ARNG's Company C, 1-111th Aviation Regiment responded, and the team quickly established a hasty helicopter landing zone, communicate with the incoming helicopter and moved the casualty to the HLZ for extraction. The

Soldiers then practiced requesting nine-line medical evacuation with the Ga. ARNG aviators as the helicopter made multiple passes to pick up the aid and litter teams.

The training events of November 13 concluded with a two-mile movement and establishment of a patrol base. The following day, the team completed a series of missions in which new Soldiers rotated into team leader positions and were confronted with an increasingly powerful enemy military force. Over the two days, the Soldiers covered 25 miles in full gear.

At the conclusion of their field problems, the Soldiers reviewed the lessons learned, and evaluated their own performance while receiving input from assessors. Each successive team will face a similar field trial while this team will move on to train additional mission essential tasks they will be expected to perform overseas.

The 54th SFAB is comprised of National Guard Soldiers from Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Texas. Georgia's 1-54th SFAB consists of a headquarters company and companies A, B and C and was organized in September 2018. The mission of the SFAB is to advise and assist host nations in the defense against external threats.



# Georgia National Guard Medics Deploy

**STORY & PHOTOS BY: MAJ. CHARLES EMMONS | PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE | GEORGIA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD**

The Georgia Army National Guard's 248th Medical Company hosted a deployment ceremony for their 55 departing Soldiers Nov. 30, 2019 in the packed drill hall of the Clay National Guard Center in Marietta, Ga.

Families, friends and service members attended the event to see their Soldiers off as they mobilize to conduct a nine-month deployment to multiple mission locations in support of Operation Inherent Resolve.

Senior leaders of the Georgia National Guard attended the ceremony, including the Adjutant General of Georgia, Maj. Gen. Tom Carden, who has worked with the company's commander, Capt. Latonya Hicks, since she was a private.

"I know these Soldiers," said Carden. "I know what is in their heart and I know how hard they've worked."

The deploying Soldiers range in rank and experience from junior enlisted Soldiers who recently joined the medical field, through field grade officers with years of professional medical experience. Among them is Maj. Brian Nadolne, a physician who practices in Marietta, Ga. at East Cobb Family Medicine. Despite his positions as president and board chair of the Georgia Academy of Family Physicians, he wanted to seek out other leadership roles. He joined the Georgia Guard three years ago, at age 49 and now looks forward to deploying with the 248th.

"I'm definitely looking forward to helping our young Soldiers who deserve to have a family physician while abroad," said Dr. Nadolne. "There's going to be a lot of opportunities to help them."

Nadolne will rotate with another doctor after three months and return to work for his employer, Northside Hospital, who has been extremely supportive of his commitment to deploy and serve overseas.

"They have gone above and beyond to make sure this deployment was easy, and to make sure I had coverage for the practice," said Nadolne.

The company has trained for the mission by conducting health service support and force health protection tasks to prepare for their mission to assist, enable and advise medical forces in their area of operations. They will support a battalion aid station and perform surgeries for patients as well.

"We've seen the growth over the last twelve months. We have training over and over again with mass casualty exercises," said Hicks. She expressed that she was very confident in their trauma training and preparation for the mission.

Sergeant Steven Bellamy will continue a family tradition of service like his father and brother before him. His father served in Vietnam and his brother was an Army Ranger. Bellamy will deploy as a medic.

"It feels real good to carry on that tradition," said Bellamy. "Now I get my chance to serve as well. We all had different jobs and we all walked different paths, but it feels good to continue on that tradition."

The 248th Medical Company deployed to Iraq in 2009. In 2015, the unit deployed to Egypt as part of the Multinational Force and Observers.



# 177th Brigade Engineer Battalion Change of Command

STORY & PHOTOS BY: MAJ. WILLIAM CARRAWAY | PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE | GEORGIA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Lieutenant Colonel Dan Chicola assumed command of the Georgia Army National Guard's 177th Brigade Engineer Battalion from Lt. Col. Jean-Paul Laurenceau during a ceremony at the Macon Readiness Center Saturday, Dec. 7, 2019. Responsibility for the Statesboro-based battalion also passed from Command Sgt. Major Timothy Sperry to 1st Sgt. Travis Rapp. Colonel Matthew Smith, commander of the Macon-based 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team presided over the ceremony.

Chicola of Metter, Ga. has served in the Statesboro-based 648th Engineer Battalion, 48th Brigade Special Troops Battalion and 177th BEB from the enlisted ranks and is an engineer by military and civilian training. He assumes command from Laurenceau who has led the 177th BEB since July 2017. Laurenceau's military career continues with an assignment to the Georgia National Guard's Joint Force Headquarters in Marietta, Ga.

In his 32-year military career, Sperry has deployed to Iraq with the Griffin-based Troop E, 108th Cavalry where he served in platoon leadership. He has deployed twice to Afghanistan most recently in 2019 as part of the 48th IBCT's fourth overseas combat deployment since September 11, 2001.

Rapp, the incoming command sergeant major, has completed combat deployments to Iraq and Afghani-

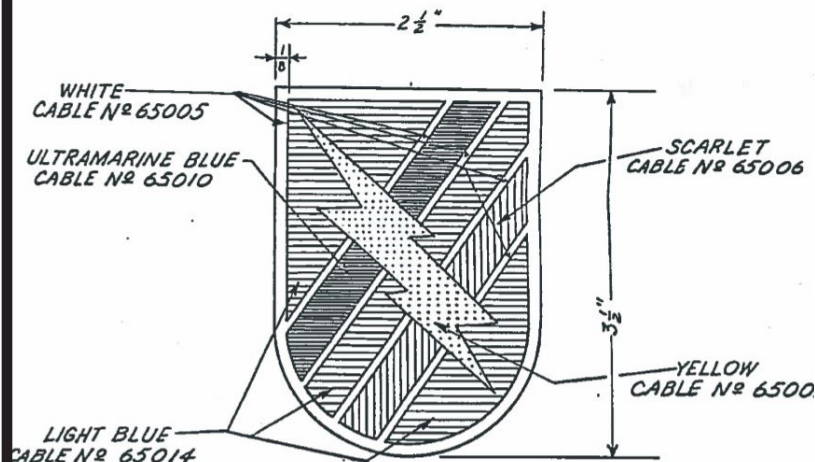
stan while serving as a combat engineer and returned from Afghanistan in July after serving as first sergeant of Task Force Saber. In his civilian capacity, Rapp works as a nuclear electrician at Nuclear Plant Vogtle in Waynesboro, Ga.

In recognition for their service as the command team of the 177th BEB, Laurenceau and Sperry received the Meritorious Service Medal from Smith. Karen Laurenceau also received the Georgia Commendation Medal for her support of the 177th BEB through her husband's command tenure.

The 177th Engineer Battalion is based in Statesboro Georgia with Companies A through D based in Glenville, Douglas, Macon and Fort Gillem, respectively. The 177th BEB was originally constituted in the Georgia Army National Guard in Statesboro as Battery A, 264th Coast Artillery March 14, 1930. During World War II, the unit served in the Pacific Theater and received campaign honors for East Indies, Papua, New Guinea and Luzon. The Statesboro unit was activated for state-side service during the Korean War and underwent a series of conversions. In 1993, Statesboro became the home of the 648th Engineer Battalion which was mobilized to Iraq in 2005. In 2007, the 648th was reorganized as the 48th BSTB and deployed to Afghanistan from 2009 to 2010. The 177th BEB received its current designation in 2015.

# BLAST FROM THE PAST:

## THE CREATION OF THE 48TH BRIGADE & ITS SHOULDER SLEEVE INSIGNIA



The Macon, Ga. based 48th Brigade was established in the Georgia National Guard by National Guard Bureau Reorganizational Authority 153-73 effective December 1, 1973. That same day, Brig. Gen. Holden West, of Bolingbroke, Ga., was appointed as the first commander of the 48th.

The designation of the 48th Brigade echoed the history and heritage of the 48th Infantry Division which existed from 1946 to 1955 and 48th Armor Division whose tanks thundered across Fort Stewart, Ga. from 1956 until its January 1968 inactivation whereupon several of the 48th Armor Division units were reorganized to form the 3rd Brigade, 30th Infantry Division. For the next five years, the Soldiers of these units would wear the patch of the 30th Infantry Division. The 48th Brigade was formed from existing elements of Georgia's 3rd Brigade, 30th Infantry Division as well as other elements within the Ga. ARNG's existing structure. The allocation of an independent brigade brought an increase of 278 Soldiers to the Ga. ARNG.

### Initial Structure of the 48th Brigade:

Several veteran Ga. ARNG units remained intact from their previous designations in the 3rd Brigade. Among these were the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 121st Infantry Regiment; 1st Battalion, 108th Armor Regiment; and 1st Battalion 230th Artillery Regiment. Joining these units were the Griffin-based Troop E, 348th Cavalry Regiment and the Douglas-based 848th Engineer Company, which was organized from the former Company B, 878th Engineer Battalion. The 148th Support Company, headquartered in Macon, was organized from previously established units. The original

strength of the 48th Brigade was 3,482 Soldiers.

### The 48th Brigade Shoulder Sleeve Insignia:

The Department of the Army Institute of Heraldry authorized the shoulder sleeve patch for the 48th Brigade April 16, 1974. It was described as follows:

"On a light blue shield, rounded in base 3 1/2 inches in height and 2 1/2 inches in width overall, two right oblique bars throughout; the upper blue and lower scarlet, both edged white and surmounted over-all by a left oblique yellow lightning bolt all within a 1/8 inch white border."

The design elements in the shoulder sleeve insignia were all symbolic of the design of the 48th Brigade itself. The light blue represents the infantry which is the basic structure of the brigade. The colors of the state flag of Georgia: scarlet, white and blue are represented in the patch with scarlet additionally symbolizing the artillery element of the brigade. The yellow of the lightning bolt symbolized the armor while the lightning bolt itself characterizes the mobility and effectiveness of the combined forces present in the brigade.

### Wearing the Boar in 74:

While the 48th Brigade's patch was approved in 1974 it had not entered production by the time of the brigade's first annual training. Thus, when West led the 48th Brigade to Fort Stewart to train from July 29 to July 13, he and the nearly 3,500 Volunteers wore the Oglethorpe crest shoulder sleeve insignia prescribed for the Ga. ARNG Headquarters Detachment and non-divisional units of the Ga. ARNG.

**STORY & PHOTOS BY: MAJ. WILLIAM CARRAWAY |  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE | GEORGIA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD**

# 48th IBCT Bids Farewell to Col. Matthew Smith, Welcomes their 28th Commander

**STORY & PHOTOS BY: MAJ. WILLIAM CARRAWAY  
| PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE | GEORGIA ARMY  
NATIONAL GUARD**

Colonel Matthew Smith relinquished command of the Georgia Army National Guard's 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team to Col. Anthony Fournier during a ceremony at the Macon Readiness Center Dec. 7, 2019.

Smith, who led the brigade since December 2016, passed the 48th IBCT colors to Col. Anthony Fournier, signifying the official transfer of command for the 48th IBCT Volunteers, an organization of more than 4,000 Georgia Guardsmen. Smith's tour of command culminated with the successful deployment of the 48th to Afghanistan in 2019. It was the brigade's fourth overseas combat deployment since September 11, 2001.

Smith led the 48th through a period of transition and increased partnership with the 3rd Infantry Division. Assuming command just six months into the brigade's associated unit pilot with the 3rd ID, Smith integrated the IBCT training with the Fort Stewart-based division. From June 5 to 25, 2017, the Volunteers endured extreme temperatures and long training days in the humid fields of Fort Stewart during an eXportable Combat Training Capability eXercise. A joint command post training exercise held at Fort Stewart in April 2018 further cemented the relationship between the 48th IBCT and 3rd ID before the brigade headed to Fort Polk, La. for a rotation at the Joint Readiness Training Center. The 48th returned to Fort Stewart for pre-mobilization training and its first elements began to deploy to Afghanistan from Hunter Army Airfield in December. By the end of January, the brigade had completed the transfer of authority for its new mission and served for the next six months before returning to Fort Stewart in July.

Following the change of command ceremony, Smith was promoted to brigadier general. His next assignment is as the Deputy Director of Operations, Readiness and Mobilization, Headquarters, Department of the Army.

Colonel Anthony Fournier has served over 30 years in the Georgia National Guard. Fournier enlisted as a private in 1989 and commissioned through the Georgia Military Institute's Officer Candidate School in 1994 as an infantry lieutenant. He served as a platoon leader in the 1st Battalion, 121st Infantry Regiment and in Troop



E, 108th Cavalry, both of the 48th Infantry Brigade. In 2000 he deployed to Bosnia as the executive officer of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 121st Infantry Regiment. Upon returning from Bosnia, Fournier assumed command of Company C, 1st Battalion, 121st Infantry Regiment and lead the company through the 2005-2006 deployment to Iraq. Fournier also deployed to Afghanistan with the 48th IBCT serving as the chief of operations for Task Force Phoenix which consisted of more 11,000 Soldiers from 27 countries charged with training the Afghan Army, Police, and Border Police. From 2012 to 2015, Fournier commanded the 2nd Battalion, 121st Infantry Regiment. In 2014, Fournier deployed to Guatemala as the task force commander of a joint, interagency, multinational training team charged with training a specialized Guatemalan unit in combating transnational organized. In his most recent assignments, Fournier served as Chief of Future Operations and then Chief of Exercise Branch for US Army Europe, Wiesbaden, Germany in 2018 and 2019.

The 48th IBCT is comprised of units whose history and battle honors predate the American Revolution. Its colors bear the campaign streamers of The Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, The Civil War, the Seminole War, both World Wars, Iraq and Afghanistan. The list of commanders for the 48th IBCT encompass those of the 48th Infantry Division (1946 to 1955); 48th Armor Division (1956 to 1968); 3rd Brigade, 30th Infantry Division (1968-1973) and the 48th Brigade (1973 to present).



## Georgians, French Honor Aviation and Civil Rights Pioneer 2nd Lt. Eugene Bullard

The Museum of Aviation at Robins Air Force Base, Ga. hosted a ceremony honoring the life and service of Eugene Bullard, the first African American fighter pilot and veteran of two world wars. Colonel Dawson Plummer, commander of the 194th Armored Brigade based at Fort Benning, Ga. and a graduate of the Tuskegee Institute spoke of Bullard's legacy and enduring impact.

"We all owe a great deal of gratitude to Lieutenant Bullard for being a true pioneer, not only in the aviation community but for how he persevered over discrimination and proved that anybody can do anything if they put their mind to it."

Five members of the original Tuskegee Airmen joined 22 of Bullard's family members, senior military leaders and French dignitaries in the tribute organized by the Georgia World War I Commission. Consul General Vincent Hommeril, Consul General of France in Atlanta, offered insight into the international reach of Bullard's story.

"Bullard's life and exploits are symbolic of the strong ties that link France and the United States, nations that have long worked together to promote

democracy and freedom," said Hommeril. "May this statue honor his accomplishments and remain as a living symbol of French and American friendship for years to come."

The ceremony concluded with the unveiling of a bronze statue of Bullard on the grounds of the museum. Colonel Ato Crumbly, the first African American commander of the Georgia Air National Guard's 116th Air Control Wing thanked the Ga. World War I Commission and others who contributed to the day's events and predicted that the Bullard statue would inspire future generations.

"When people walk by (the statue), read the name then Google it and learn about his legacy, it is going to continue and propagate, and the word will spread."

Bullard, the son of a former slave, was born in Columbus, Ga. October 9, 1895. Leaving a troubled home in 1906 at the age of 11, Bullard wandered for six years seeking opportunity but finding discrimination and racism in a segregated Jim Crow society. In 1912, Bullard stole aboard a ship bound for the United Kingdom. Making his way to London, Bullard found work as an entertainer and boxer. In 1913, he visited Paris



for a boxing match and elected to stay having found the French culture to his liking.

In August 1914, Germany declared war on France. Bullard enlisted in the French Army in October 1914, nearly three years before American troops entered combat. Bullard was seriously wounded in March 1916 while serving with the French 170th Infantry Regiment, 48th Infantry Division. Recovering from his wounds, Bullard volunteered for aviation service and completed his flight training in May 1917. Bullard flew more than 20 combat missions before the end of the war.

After the armistice, Bullard remained in France where he worked as a musician and nightclub manager. When Germany invaded France in 1940, Bullard again enlisted as an infantryman. He was again wounded in action and returned to the United States the following month after escaping German-held France. Despite his fame overseas, Bullard faded into obscurity in his home country. In 1961, shortly before his death, Bullard, a decorated veteran of two world wars, whom Charles De Gaulle had dubbed a Knight of the Legion of Honor, was working as an elevator operator in New

York City. He died October 12, 1961 at the age of 66.

In the decades following his death, the story of Bullard's life and service has received greater attention. In 1989, Bullard was inducted into the Georgia Aviation Hall of Fame. Five years later he was recognized with a second lieutenant's commission in the U.S. Air Force. Now, more than 100 years after his historic first flight, his statue stands as an inspiring beacon for future generations.

Speaking at a reception following the statue unveiling, Maj. Gen. Tom Carden, Adjutant General of the Georgia Department of Defense, spoke to the family of Eugene Bullard, the Tuskegee Airmen and all those who contributed to the dedication of the statue.

"They say it's never too late to do the right thing and if I have ever seen an example of those words in action, I have seen it here today at this great museum," said Carden. "I want to personally thank you for your service, your sacrifice and for making sure our state never forgets Eugene Bullard and what he has done for our country."

**STORY & PHOTOS BY: MAJ. WILLIAM CARRAWAY | PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE | GEORGIA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD**



# Georgia National Guard Celebrates 25 Years of Partnership with Country of Georgia

**STORY BY: CAPT. BRYANT WINE | PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE | GEORGIA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD**

The Georgia National Guard and country of Georgia formally celebrated the 25th anniversary of the signing of their State Partnership Program agreement at the Georgia National Guard Joint Force Headquarters in Marietta, Georgia Nov. 19, 2019.

The State Partnership Program originated in 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In April 1992, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Colin Powell, presented a new program called the Joint Contact Team Program. The purpose of this program was for the Department of Defense to partner with newly independent Eastern Bloc states to promote enduring, mutually beneficial security relationships. Lieutenant General John B. Conaway, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, offered to Powell the services of the National Guard to fulfill this new program.

The State Partnership Program evolved from the Joint Contact Team Program in which the first state partnerships formed in 1993. Signed on Oct. 3, 1994, the agreement between both Georgias was the 17th partner-

ship in the program's history.

Over the course of twenty-five years, the partnership has grown beyond focusing on military development.

"This partnership is not just a military to military partnership," said Maj. Gen. Thomas Carden Jr., the Adjutant General of the Georgia. "We train doctors as a part of this partnership, we emphasize rule of law and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation that has been a part of this partnership, we develop public health in respect to this partnership, and many other areas where we all benefit and is larger than just a uniformed military."

Lieutenant Colonel Colin Thompson, the Georgia National Guard State Partnership Program Director, iterated how the agreement is more than a military relationship. He explained that the Emory School of Medicine and Tbilisi State Medical University participate in an exchange program that trains and confers degrees upon Georgian physicians. According to Thompson, private businesses and non-profit organizations followed the Georgia National Guard's example to serve the



country of Georgia.

Georgian dignitaries attending the ceremony included Irakli Garibashvili, the Minister of Defense of the country of Georgia; David Bakradze, Georgian ambassador to the United States and Lela Chikovani, First Deputy Minister of Defense of the country of Georgia. Garibashvili and Bakradze expressed the importance of the partnership and their gratitude to the United States and state of Georgia in their speeches.

"American support of our country has been unwavering, and all Georgian people are thankful," remarked Garibashvili. "For nearly three decades, this relationship has been our interest; has centered on shared values in our belief in democratic principles, rule of law, and inherent right to existence. We have fought together, sustained losses together, and we will continue to serve together."

Bakradze followed by stating, "Georgia has proven that a small nation can be a big friend, and we are very

proud of this partnership. Georgia faces its own challenges, but we have never felt alone; we have never felt abandoned."

After a video presentation and gift exchanges, Carden presented Garibashvili and Chikovani with the Oglethorpe Distinguished Service Medal. This was followed by Georgia National Guard leadership and the dignitaries from Georgia signing a commemorative document that recognized the 25th anniversary and reaffirmed the State Partnership Program agreement.

Carden concluded his remarks stating, "It is my honor to stand before you today, and thank you and our distinguished Georgian delegation for all that you have done and continue to do to make this partnership an example for the world to emulate."

**PHOTOS COURTESY OF STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM  
& 161 MILITARY HISTORY DETACHMENT |  
GEORGIA NATIONAL GUARD**

# THE END OF AN ERA

## JSTARS FLIES THE LAST SORTIE OUT OF CENTCOM

An 18-year long deployment of the E-8C Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System aircraft to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility, and the second longest deployment in U.S. Air Force history, came to an end Oct. 1, 2019.

Just before sunrise, Col. Konata Crumbly, 116th Air Control Wing commander and Joint STARS aircraft commander, pulled back the flight controls and lifted the aircraft from the runway on the last Joint STARS sortie leaving Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar, marking the end of an era.

“Looking out the window of the flight deck and seeing Al Udeid drifting into the distance for the last time after so many years was a momentous occasion,” said Crumbly. “It is difficult to measure the kind of success our Team JSTARS Airmen and Soldiers achieved over the last 18 years; it can only be measured in lives not lost.”

Joint STARS has been continually deployed to the CENTCOM area of responsibility every day since November 2001. Since then they have flown 10,938 sorties, equaling 114,426.6 combat flying hours in support of nearly every CENTCOM operation including Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, Freedom Sentinel and Inherent Resolve.

“Team JSTARS’ flawless deployment of the Joint STARS weapon system over nearly two decades is a textbook example of total force integration and joint force execution done properly,” said Brig. Gen. Thomas Grabowski, Georgia Air National Guard commander. “They have set the gold standard in TFI and will continue to lead the way as they restructure to the new Advanced Battle Management System supporting the Air Force we need.”

Joint STARS aircraft fly over assigned areas of responsibilities and provide battle management, command and control, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance so theater joint force commanders have

real time decision making tools to prevent loss of life and delay, disrupt and destroy enemy forces.

“Our Airmen and Soldiers, past and present, have demonstrated their commitment and dedication to excellence by overcoming countless obstacles, generating combat airpower, and taking the fight to our adversaries whenever and wherever called upon,” said Col. Edward Goebel, 461st Air Control Wing commander. “I am very proud to be part of this unique capability, and I have every confidence Team JSTARS will continue to answer our nation’s call with disciplined execution and dedication to excellence.”

Established Oct. 1, 2002, as the U.S. Air Force’s first total force initiative wing, Team JSTARS is based at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia. It is made up of the Georgia Air National Guard’s 116th ACW, the Air Combat Command’s 461st ACW, and the active duty Army Intelligence and Security Command’s 138th Military Intelligence Company.

“The relationship between the Soldiers and Airmen of Team JSTARS enabled unprecedented, timely support to CENTCOM maneuver commanders, undoubtedly saving countless American and coalition service members’ lives,” said Maj. Nicholas Sikes, 138th MICO commander. “Our support will continue as long as the nation and the joint force commanders need the capabilities we can provide.”

Since 2001, Airmen and Soldiers from Team JSTARS have collectively deployed thousands of times to the CENTCOM area of responsibility in support of the Joint STARS mission. From aircraft maintainers and operators to medical, logistics and administrative personnel, the past 18 years have proven how teamwork, commitment, and service before self all come together to ensure mission success.

**STORY BY: 1ST LT. RONALD COLE |  
116TH AIR CONTROL WING PUBLIC  
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**PHOTOS COURTESY OF TECH. SGT. CARLOS  
TREVINO | 379TH AIR EXPEDITIONARY WING  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS | UNITED STATES AIR FORCE**



# GEORGIA ARMY NATIONAL GUARDSMAN RECOGNIZED FOR IPPS-A MIGRATION



Warrant Officer Brian Sexton is an, “IPPS-A Best of the Best Soldier” for helping the Georgia Army National Guard migrate from the Standard Installation and Division Personnel Reporting System to the Integrated Personnel and Pay System-Army (IPPS-A).

Sexton, Georgia Army National Guard systems integration branch (SIB) chief, said he and his team began their migration by using lessons learned from other states.

“We started with permanent assignments, making sure all of our Soldiers got permanent assignments,” said Sexton. “We would make sure all the data elements lined up, ran the scripts and if it didn’t work, we would start back over and do it again. We basically tested and proved theories until all our Soldiers were correct.”

Sexton said the biggest challenge he and his team faced was the re-slots assignment – the temporary assignments within IPPS-A. The difference in the use of language is what made the re-slots challenging, said Sexton.

“The explanations of certain processes prior to cutover can be difficult to understand for someone using the system for the first time,” he said. “So, when we reviewed several rosters prior to cutover, understanding all of them was a challenge.”

Despite the challenges, the team completed the migration and went live with IPPS-A in December 2019.

“All the hard work gives you a certain expectation,” said Sexton. “So, when you complete the first transaction in IPPS-A, you feel like you know what you’re doing. This is day one and everyone is ready. That makes me proud.”

Now that Georgia is live in the system, Sexton says Soldiers have some control over how quickly their human resources actions are completed.

“I joined the military as an infantry Soldier,” he said. “Nothing frustrates me more than when a 42A looks at you like you’re crazy when you fill out a document wrong, or I wanted to update my records. I am excited Soldiers will now have some sort of control over their HR stuff.”

**STORY COURTESY OF JUSTIN CREECH | IPPS-A STRATCOM**

**PHOTO COURTESY OF WARRANT OFFICER BRIAN SEXTON | GEORGIA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD**

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# 148TH BRIGADE SUPPORT BATTALION CHANGE OF COMMAND

**STORY & PHOTOS BY: MAJ. WILLIAM CARRAWAY | PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE |  
GEORGIA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD**

Lieutenant Colonel Luke Gaspard assumed command of the Georgia Army National Guard's 148th Brigade Support Battalion from Lt. Col. Grant Minor during a ceremony at the battalion's Macon armory Saturday, Dec. 7, 2019. Colonel Matthew Smith, commander of the Macon-based 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, praised the work of the 148th under Minor's leadership.

"Bottom line, what you have accomplished over the past couple of years has been incredible," said Smith. "The entire brigade depends on your success and you rose to the occasion."

Minor, a veteran of multiple Afghanistan deployments, has commanded the 148th BSB Wishmasters since October 2016 and supported the 48th IBCT through an eXportable Combat Training Capability exercise at Fort Stewart as well as a rotation at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk. In the course of his Ga. ARNG career, Minor has served as the surface maintenance division chief and distribution management branch chief for the Georgia National Guard's Joint Force Headquarters in Marietta, Ga.

Smith presented Minor with the Meritorious Service Medal in recognition of his outstanding leadership and efforts as the rear detachment commander during the 48th IBCT's deployment to Afghanistan in 2019. Minor thanked Smith for his mentorship and Command Sgt. Major John Barnard for his support before recognizing his Soldiers.

"Soldiers of the Wishmaster Battalion, thank you for preparing me over the past three years," said Minor. "I thank you for your flexibility, adaptability, ingenuity and capacity. You are great Americans and you are heroes. I thank you, and I thank your families for their sacrifice."

Minor concluded his remarks with words for his successor.

"Welcome back to the Wishmaster Battalion," said Minor addressing Gaspard. "Good Luck to you. I have full faith and confidence that the Wishmaster Soldiers will continue to perform alongside you."

Gaspard, a resident of Marietta, Ga., is a graduate of North Ga. College and State University who has com-



pleted assignments of increasing responsibility in the 148th from company leadership to support operations officer. An infantry officer, Gaspard has deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan.

In his remarks following the assumption of command, Gaspard thanked Minor for his support and recognized senior leaders for entrusting him with the command.

"I would like to thank Col. Smith and the Georgia National Guard for the opportunity to command this battalion," said Gaspard. "It is exciting to be a Wishmaster again."

The 148th Brigade Support Battalion is based in Macon, Ga. The Brigade consists of four organic companies and six companies that support the organic battalions of the 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. Headquarters Company and Company C are based in Macon. Company A is based in Dublin while Company B operates out of Jackson.

The 148th BSB traces its lineage to the earliest militia units of Monroe County, Ga. which served in the Seminole War and American Civil War. The unit mobilized to Europe during World War I and served in the Pacific Theater as Company A, 193rd Tank Battalion during World War II. The 148th was activated for federal service during Operation Desert Storm and deployed to Iraq from 2005 to 2006. From 2009 to 2010, the battalion served in Afghanistan and was awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation.

# JSTARS PARTNERS WITH MERCER UNIVERSITY:

## Mercer Students Help Team JSTARS with Innovative Approach to Scheduling Frustrations



**STORY BY: TECH. SGT. NANCY GOLDBERGER | 116TH AIR CONTROL WING | GEORGIA AIR NATIONAL GUARD**  
**PHOTOS BY: TECH. AIRMAN JOSIAH MEECE | 116TH AIR CONTROL WING | GEORGIA AIR NATIONAL GUARD**

Team JSTARS, the sole operators of the E-8C Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System, recently teamed up with Mercer University's computer science department in Macon to advance an antiquated software system during the fall 2019 semester.

The vision for the project is to make the multiple databases the unit uses for scheduling missions and flying operations a seamless system, and aggregate 15 years of scheduling data to analyze for improvements, according to Lt. Col. Vanessa Cox, the chief of scheduling with the Georgia Air National Guard's 116th Operations Support Squadron.

"When we can schedule more effectively, we train more effectively," Cox said. "We need long-term data in one coherent place to do that."

During the process, Cox made several trips to the university to meet with upperclassmen and explained in unclassified terms how the JSTARS scheduling section does business. The computer science class also took a tour of JSTARS so students could step into crew members' boots as they developed tools to best meet the troops' needs.

"All of our needs are based on how we operate, and it's difficult to explain it to people outside the organization," Cox said. "It's a whole different world."

The process allowed military members to present their mission, translating military jargon to civilian terms, and enhance interagency cooperation. This skill is key to domestic and international operations for Team JSTARS as they provide manned joint airborne command and control, intelligence, surveillance, and

reconnaissance capability to combatant commanders worldwide.

By the end of the semester, Cox expects they'll see demonstration products, which the unit can take to a contractor to build a fully-operational version in line with cybersecurity and other federal requirements.

The students, in turn, will use this as their capstone project and provide the community with better-prepared technologists.

"It's very beneficial for my students to see a real-world problem they can help with" said Dr. Bob Allen, the chair of Mercer's computer science department.

Allen ran a trial course in the spring of 2019 to explore software support for Robins Air Force Base, working with Lt. Col. Jay Vizcarra, the Robins Spark Innovation chief with the 461st Air Control Wing. It gained enough interest to prompt Allen to create a formal course for the fall.

Cox recognized the potential of the partnership based on her own computer science background, so when the call went out for projects, she jumped on the chance.

As more opportunities to innovate and collaborate with the community come to light, it will take subject matter experts to identify opportunities for improvement.

"We need Airmen in their shops who know their processes to get up and say, 'This isn't working' or 'This could be better,'" said Cox. "We need an appetite for innovation, for change."

# AROUND THE GEORGIA GUARD



## GEORGIA NATIONAL GUARDSMEN PARTICIPATE IN EXTERNAL EVALUATION

Georgia National Guardsmen move simulated injured persons from disaster area during the Region IV EXEVAL 2019 at Camp Blanding, Fla., Dec. 10, 2019. EXEVAL 2019 is a triennial exercise that validates that the Region IV Homeland Response Force is fully operationally capable and prepared to conduct chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear response enterprise operations.



## SQUAD AUTOMATIC WEAPONS COURSE

Georgia National Guardsmen practice disassembling and assembling the M249 machine gun during the squad automatic weapons course at Fort Stewart, Ga. on Nov. 22, 2019. The week-long course includes familiarization with the M249, zeroing and qualification.



## GEORGIA GUARDSMAN MAKES THE GRADE

Georgia Army National Guardsman, Sgt. 1st Class David P. Arp, advanced leader course (ALC) course manager for the Marietta-based 122nd Regional Training Institute, is recognized as the December 2019 “Hero of the Battlefield” by the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). Arp improved the effectiveness of lesson plans for the intelligence advanced leader course for the U.S. Army.

## GOLD STAR FATHERS DAY AT THE CAPITOL

Service members, staff and families from around the state gathered at the Georgia State Capitol for Gold Star Fathers Day event on Nov. 7, 2019. Georgia is the first state to recognize Gold Star Father’s Day as a statewide observance.



## 165TH ASOS PARTICIPATE IN MAGNOLIA STRIKE

U.S. Air Force Tactical Party Air Control Airmen from the 165th Air Support Operations Squadron and the 284th ASOS conduct room-clearing procedures during Magnolia Strike, at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, Nov. 18, 2019. Magnolia Strike is an exercise that gives battlefield Airmen an oppprtunity to train in specialized combat skills such as, tactical combat casualty combat care, fast-ropeing, close quarters combat and breaching operations.





# GEORGIA GUARDSMAN

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