

Lt. Col Brett Venable takes over Medical Task Force

By **STAFF SGT. KENNY HATTEN**
CSJFTC Public Affairs

Medical Task Force Shelby conducted a change of command ceremony June 25 at Building 1402, Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center.

Outgoing MTFs Commander Col. James D. Grady relinquished command of the unit to Lt. Col. Brett H. Venable, the event being symbolized by the ceremonial passing of the unit colors, and hosted by the Commander of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Army Medical Center, Col. Christopher M. Castle.

“Jim Grady is a serious and committed Soldier and physician who has been dragging his young Family around the planet through a series of demanding and competitive assignments,” said Castle. “He also deployed in Operation Enduring Freedom as an Operations Task Force Surgeon. No other could have commanded this Task Force these past few years. He served with distinction as the commander here.”

Castle welcomed Venable as the new commander, and expressed great confidence in his ability to lead Medical Task Force – Shelby into the future.

“Venable has 18 years of service and an equally impressive resume coming in here,” said Castle. “He is another fine leader for this organization. Col. Grady is indeed a tough act to follow but I am confident that Venable is up to the task.”

As he relinquished command, Grady thanked the Soldiers of MTF-S for their outstanding service and compassion in the course of their duties.

“Thanks to the staff and Soldiers of MTF-S for making the last two years the most rewarding of my career,” said Grady. “I’m so proud of the staff for always recognizing the sacrifices of the Soldiers and treating them as if they would want their own Family members to be treated.”

After assuming command of the medical task force, Lt. Col. Venable spoke to the Soldiers and staff of his new command.

“To the officers, NCOs, Soldiers and civilians of this Task Force, I’m immensely proud of the work you do every day to support the Camp Shelby mission. I’m honored to be your commander and



Top photo, Lt. Col. Venable accepts the first salute of his new command from Executive Officer Lt. Col. Amy Ninneman following the change of command ceremony at CSJFTC. Above left, the Commander of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Army Medical Center, Col. Christopher Castle, presents the MTF-S unit guidon to incoming Medical Task Force – Shelby Commander Lt. Col. Brett Venable during the change of command ceremony June 25. Above right, Col. Castle, left, presented outgoing MTF-S Commander Col. Grady with the Meritorious Service Medal for outstanding meritorious service.

look forward to serving you,” he said. “Col. Grady was a great commander and I’m just going to pick up the torch and move the organization forward. I really look forward to working with the Soldiers and civilians here at Camp Shelby.”

Col. Grady, M.D. has more than 22 years of active service as a commissioned officer. He is a 1990 graduate of Bucknell University where he earned a degree in

Biology and was commissioned as an Infantry officer.

Grady attended the Uniformed Services University where he received his medical degree and commissioning as a medical corps officer. He completed his residency training in family medicine at Dewitt Army Community Hospital in 2001. He is married to Stephanie Hopp Grady. They have three children, Samuel, age 7, Lillian, age 5 and Henry, age 2.

Lt. Col. Venable is a native of Portsmouth, Va., and is a distinguished military graduate of Old Dominion University. He received his commission in the Medical Service Corps while earning a Bachelor of Science in Biology, graduating magna cum laude.

Venable attended graduate school at Syracuse University where he earned a Master of Business Administration from the Whitman School of Management

and a Master of Public Administration from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs. He is accompanied by this new command by his wife, Anja.

Medical Task Force Shelby provides compassionate and comprehensive force health protection and health service support to military personnel serving, training, mobilizing and demobilizing at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center.



Photo by Dana Elise Smith, CSJFTC Public Affairs
Angelena Puckett from the Directorate of Resource Management and Greg Gellerman from First Army Division East presented Celeste Wathen with a Civilian Service Award at Wathen’s retirement ceremony July 2.

Wathen retires after 23 years

By **DANA ELISE SMITH**
CSJFTC Public Affairs

A retirement and farewell ceremony was held for Celeste Wathen at the Camp Shelby All Ranks Club July 2.

Wathen served 23 years, 10 months of service with the Federal government. Her first Federal position was that of an accounting technician in the Comptroller’s Office at Naval Station Guantanamo, Cuba from October 1981 through December 1986. In January 1987, she continued her career at Naval Air Station in Jacksonville, Fla., work-

PERSONNEL PROFILE CIVILIAN

ing as an accounting technician under the Regional Accounting and Disbursing Center. She later worked as a budget clerk with the Personnel Support Activity and then finally as a budget analyst with the Naval Computer and Telecommunications Station until she resigned in 1996. She continued her federal career as a budget ana-

lyst for Headquarters First Army at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center in July 2004. Her position later transitioned under the command of First Army Division East.

The ceremony was hosted by Angelena Puckett, who works in the Di-

See **RETIRE**, Page 6

REMEMBER

THOSE WHO SERVED

EXTRA EXTRA!

Big Reach! Small Price!

Run this size ad in over 100 newspapers statewide for less than \$11 per paper.

Call your local newspaper or MS Press Services at 601-981-3060.

35TH ANNUAL MS WATERMELON FESTIVAL

Friday-Saturday, July 19th & 20th • Mize, MS

Free Watermelon! Stop by the watermelon booth for some of the best flavor in the South & enjoy the days festivities!

5K Run • Car & Truck Show • Arts & Crafts • Watermelon Eating & Seed Spitting Contest • Biggest Watermelon Contest • Food Booths

New This Year - Vocal Talent Competition Friday Night!

Live in Concert Saturday Night Jason Michael Carroll!

Saturday performance by Backroads!

Hosted by the Town of Mize VFD. For more information call Terresa Stewart, 601.733.5647 or Town Hall, 601.733.2221!