

First Battle Staff class graduates at Camp Shelby

By SPC. KAREN SAMPSON
177th Armored Brigade PA

The First Army Training Academy held commencement for 15 students attending the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, Battle Staff Noncommissioned Officer Course (BSNCOC) Video Teleconference Training March 26.

Command Sgt. Maj. Milton C. Elliot, command sergeant major of the 2nd Battalion, 346th Regiment, was the guest speaker for the graduation.

"This was a pilot class for Camp Shelby utilizing VTT," said Sgt. 1st Class Troy D. Batiste, Operations NCO for the 2nd Battalion, 410th Field Artillery Regiment and Assistant Instructor for the BSNCOC. "The instructors here were liaisons for instructors at Fort Bliss, Texas."

"I felt the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) unit of the course was

the most challenging," said Sgt. 1st Class Katrina F. Crawford, native of Abilene, Texas and Senior Human Resources NCO for the 3rd Battalion, 346th Regiment. "There was a lot of information to take in [from] a three-day block of instruction."

According to the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, BSNCOC is the only course offered by the U.S. Army to educate NCO staff members on how to operate as part of a battalion or higher staff. The course instruction concentrates on the battle staff duties and responsibilities of the coordinating and special staff sections, regardless of the NCOs functional area of assignment.

"I thought the course was challenging," said Sgt. 1st Class Peter J. Novak, 177th Armored Brigade Staff Intelligence NCOIC and native of Henniker, N.H. "I think the assistance of the instructors is the key to our success because of their willingness



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Karen Sampson, 177th PA

The graduates of the Battle Staff NCO Course stand for a photo after completing the course at CSJFTC.

to be there anytime we needed them."

The graduates will return to their units having gained a special skill set that adds value to accomplishing the mission. These skills are also helpful in the advancement of their professional military careers.

First Army ensures mobilization training is relevant, realistic and reflects the most current conditions Soldiers will face in theater. First Army Division East directly supports the Chief of Staff of the Army's priority of providing trained, equipped and ready forces to win the current fight, while maintaining responsiveness for unforeseen contingencies.

Meet Kelsey Dykes

By DANA ELISE SMITH
CSJFTC Public Affairs

Kelsey Warren Dykes is a server at Camp Shelby's All Ranks Club. Her job includes prepping the salad bar, preparing the dining room for service and making cookies and sweet tea. She said she enjoys serving the troops and making them feel like Family.

The native of Los Angeles,



Dykes

Calif., graduated from Beverly Hills High School in 2008, a year early. She earned an associate degree from Los Angeles City College. She is currently attending Jones County Junior College and hopes to earn a bachelor's degree in nursing.

Dykes said she comes from a military family. Many are members of the Air Force including Rodrick Ott, who went missing in action while flying his plane more than 40 years ago.

"Just two years ago my mother

was visiting the Philippines and found a military memorial with his name on it," said Dykes. "We can only assume he ended up somewhere in that area. It's still a complete mystery."

Dykes now lives in Hatties-

PERSONNEL PROFILE CIVILIAN

burg.

In her spare time, she enjoys shooting black and white photographs and developing them in her dark room at home. She also enjoys outdoor activities, especially gardening.

"I have recently taken a liking

to gardening. My anniversary present this year was a garden planter hand made by Emile!" she said.

Dykes said she spends most of her spare time with her long-time boyfriend Emile Kalil, a mechanic who works at Sound Advice.

"Together we like to grill at night as we debate over current events and make s'mores to stave off our appetites," she said. "We also like wandering down the Longleaf Trace or exploring the Hattiesburg nightlife."

She owns two ferrets, Bandit and Smokey and a half pit-bull, half hound dog named Bae.

NCO Conference

The Mississippi National Guard NCO Association Conference will be at the Whispering Wood Hotel and Conference Center, 11200 East Goodman Road, Olive Branch MS, April 19-21.

We encourage everyone to attend this year's conference in support of our association. With membership dropping, we need to make every effort to sustain our membership and search for ways to make it grow.

We need full involvement in the association and ask that everyone please talk to your fellow Soldiers and Airmen about the NCO Association and the many benefits of membership.

For more information, contact Keith Ales at 662-816-6452



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