

PERSONNEL PROFILE

ENLISTED

Master Sgt. Larry Odom has 26 years of service

By DANA ELISE SMITH
CSJFTC Public Affairs

Master Sgt. Larry Odom is the acting sergeant major for the Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center.

“My job is to help make sure Camp Shelby is current with what is needed to conduct training and mobilization for both deploying units as well as annual training for National Guard units from all across the United States and its territories,” said Odom.

Before joining the National Guard he worked in his father’s trade as an iron-worker.

“After working in this trade for over two years, I decided that there had to be more to life than working 10 to 12 hour days in the same occupation for a lifetime. Luckily, I had an uncle whose house we were helping to build ask me about joining the local National Guard unit. He had been a member for several years and spoke very highly of it, so I decided to give it a chance,” said Odom.

His 26 total years of service, 16 of them he spent serving in the Active Guard and Reserve Program. During his career, he has served as a team leader, squad leader, platoon sergeant, acting first sergeant, administrative NCO, training NCO and readiness NCO.

He deployed in support of Desert Shield/Desert Storm from 1990 to 1991 with the 786th Transportation Company headquartered in Lucedale. He deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom from 2004 to 2006 with Company B, 150th Combat Engineer Battalion, headquartered in Quitman.

He was awarded the title of AGR NCO of the Year three times for his company, battalion and brigade in 1996. He won the respective titles again in 1997 and in addition, won the title of AGR Soldier of the Year for the State of Mississippi. He went on to compete in the Regional Competition in Orlando, Fla.



Submitted Photo
Pictured are Master Sgt. Larry Odom and his wife, Kellie, at the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States National Conference in West Virginia in 2011.

Odom is actively involved with the Mississippi National Guard Noncommissioned Officers Association. He has served as president, vice-president, area director and sergeant at arms within the association.

He is married to his wife of 24 years, Kellie, and has two children, Cody, 23 and Christian, 15. Cody is currently a member of Detachment 1, Company A, 155th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, headquartered at Camp Shelby. Christian will be a freshman at George County High School next year.

Odom enjoys his spare time hunting, fishing, competition archery with American Shooters Association (ASA), wood working, playing volleyball.

Interviewing 101...

By BRYAN THARPE
ACAP TSM

You have submitted your resume to several companies and are waiting anxiously for calls to start coming in for interviews. Unfortunately, many job seekers are completely unprepared when the calls begin. Now, before those calls start, is the time to prepare. A good place to start preparing is simply to accept the fact that interviewing is very possibly the most challenging part of the job search process. It’s immaterial that you have a very effective resume and cover letter if you are unable to do well in interviews. Remember that the resume and cover letter normally only get you in the door—in other words, they may get you an interview. However, it’s the interview that gets you the job.

A second important step in preparation is to understand several common “interview myths,” assumptions that job seekers make about the interview process which are not necessarily true. Following are a few of those myths.

Myth 1: All interviewers are skilled.

Although managers usually conduct interviews, they don’t necessarily have the skills necessary to conduct successful interviews. Many times managers take the interview process for granted and no one in the company understands the need to train interviewers. One result of this lack of skill on the part of interviewers is that candidates sometimes have the opportunity to “take the ball and run with it” to ensure they cover the material they’ve developed in preparing for the interview. You might look at this process as helping the interviewer get relevant information from you to make an informed decision about your qualifications for the job.

Myth 2: Open-ended questions most interviewers ask are dumb.

Not true! An example of a very common open-ended question is “tell me about yourself.” Interviewers often use open-ended questions to find reasons to eliminate you from consideration. Such questions give you the perfect opportunity to provide too much information and reveal your lack of focus. You would be wise to anticipate such questions and develop good answers for the most common ones. (The ACAP Center has a library that consists of books on interviewing and lists such questions and suggest information you should cover in your answers.)

Myth 3: You will always know how well you did in an interview. You should not assume you know where you stand after the interview is over. You may underestimate the

“poker face” of the interviewer. Some interviewers are skilled in such techniques and may be able to hide their thoughts about your performance during the interview. Additionally, the interviewer frequently will not know at the time you interview how well you stack up against other candidates or may need to discuss a hiring decision with a supervisor.

Myth 4: Rehearsing for an interview doesn’t really help.

Rehearsing for an interview is one of the absolute best ways for you to gain confidence. It gives you the opportunity to hear your answers to questions about yourself and your experience, skills, and work habits. It also gives you the opportunity to evaluate such things as your body language, rate of speech, and appearance. You certainly don’t want to memorize answers to certain questions, but you do want to rehearse answers to questions that are frequently asked.

If you are an ACAP client, an excellent way to rehearse your interviewing techniques is to take advantage of the Interviewing Module on the ACAP XXI System offered by the ACAP Center. The staff will be glad to assist you with practicing your interview and review the taping of it with you to use in honing your interviewing skills.

A second very important step in preparing for an interview is to thoroughly research the company and the position for which you’re interviewing prior to the interview. The more you know about the company and the job, the more effectively you can provide answers that match the job you’re applying for. The ACAP Center staff can provide you tips for researching companies.

A third step in preparing for an interview is to develop a clear strategy and to clarify your short- and long-term goals. As you interview, your strategy and goals will help you stay focused. This doesn’t necessarily mean that you’ll share all your goals during the interview, particularly goals which might make you come across with a “what’s in it for me” attitude. On the other hand, you’ll frequently get questions such as “What would you expect to achieve during your first year on the job?” or “Where would you like to be in the company five years from now?” which will require you to have thought through your goals and strategy if you are to answer most effectively.

The ACAP Center staff would welcome the opportunity to assist you as you work through these steps in getting ready for interviews. So, before that first call comes in offering you an interview, contact the Ft Rucker ACAP Center at 334-255-2558, Camp Shelby ACAP Office at 601-558-2298, or the Eglin A&FRC at 850-882-9060.

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