

# 228TH THEATER TACTICAL SIGNAL BRIGADE AT 2015



*Signal Ready, Signal Strong*



- 4-5 Vigilant Guard
- 6-11 When Disaster Strikes
- 12-13 S.C. Best Warrior Competition
- 14-15 Winter Storm Response
- 16 Deployment Ceremony
- 17 Chaplain Says Goodbye
- 18-19 Scenes from around AT

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Col. Wallace Hall

**Command Sergeant Major:**  
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Staff Sgt. Roberto Di Giovine  
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**On the Cover**  
Members of the 228th Theater Tactical Signal Brigade setup a Deployable Rapid Assembly Shelter and Commander's Command, Control and Communications Unit at the Anderson County Sheriff's Office Training Center in Anderson, S.C., March 7, as part of Vigilant Guard. (Photo by 1st Lt. Jessica Donnelly)



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# Commander's Corner

Message from  
Lt. Col. John Ramsey  
Vigilant Guard, TF West  
Battle Commander

The 228th Theater Tactical Signal Brigade, Headquarters and Headquarter Company embarked on annual training March 1-15, 2015, supporting Vigilant Guard S.C. 2015, a Northern Command national-level exercise, as the Western Conglomerate Task Force. The TF is responsible to assist 20 county Emergency Operation Centers in the upstate of South Carolina.

During pre-deployment, leading up to the exercise, the unit/staff sections assisted in the design and layout of the tactical operations center, rehearsed, tested equipment and conducted necessary load outs. The responsibility as the TF lead, which included managing mission assignments consisting of health and welfare checks, security checks, search and rescue, and traffic control points, was a

new challenge for the staff but they responded well. The pre-deployment training enabled the staff sections to respond and emerged as a cohesive group supporting operations in the Western Conglomerate. The staff exercise and support for VG15 relayed into 16 successful missions, effective staff coordination and reporting to the joint operations center.

During the exercise the 228th TTSB's, Sgt. 1st Class Jeff Goode and team successfully deployed the incident commanders command and control communications unit (IC4U) that provided data and voice communications for the Anderson County EOC and distributed streaming video of the incident site for assessment. The operations staff coordinated and assisted TF Aviation in the deployment of aircraft and evac-



uation of simulated patients in Greenville County due to request for mass evacuation of injured personnel injured due to simulated tornado damage of a school.

In addition, the 228th TTSB's, Maj. James Dangerfield and team deployed to support the joint staging, reception, onward movement, and integration (JRSOI) site for integrating incoming emergency management assistance compact units. The team processed multiple units, integrated their communications assets into the operations, deconflicted call words and frequencies, conducted reverse JRSOI

operations and assisted teams assigned to the JRSOI site.

Finally, the ultimate goal was to forge a relationship with the counties we supported, this exercise cemented the National Guard's relationship between Anderson and Greenville counties and built the foundation to reach out to other counties in order to develop a working relationship to respond when requested to aid in support.

*Always Ready, Always There*

# Vigilant Guard

The South Carolina National Guard, along with state and county emergency management agencies, conducted a disaster readiness exercise called Vigilant Guard.

Vigilant Guard was an eight-day field exercise held March 5-12, which took place at numerous locations across South Carolina. This exercise tested the National Guard's abilities to support response operations based on simulated emergency scenarios, such as the landfall of a hurricane, a collapsed building, widespread fires and mass casualties. The National Guard, along with local, state and federal partners deployed to exercise venues in Georgetown, with other sites including Moncks Corner, Spartanburg, Greenville, Anderson, Florence, West Columbia and Williamsburg.

"Exercises like Vigilant Guard give our Soldiers and Airmen a chance to hone their skills and

work with our community partners to respond to any crisis our state may face," said Maj. Gen. Gregory W. Batts, Assistant Adjutant General for the South Carolina National Guard, who was in the role as the dual-status commander during Vigilant Guard. "Our state has the potential for many threats, including earthquakes, tornadoes, floods, and hurricanes."

Batts added that people in South Carolina saw an increase in military equipment moving along roads and interstates, as well as rotary aircraft flying during the exercise. The last time South Carolina held a Vigilant Guard exercise was in 2008, when participants

responded to a simulated earthquake event in the Beaufort area. This year's Vigilant Guard exercise focused on interagency relationships and response measures during a severe weather event, primarily a category 4 hurricane striking the coast, much like Hurricane Hugo did in 1989.

Vigilant Guard U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Jeff Goode, 228th Theater Tactical Signal Brigade Operations communications manager, prepares a Defense Advanced GPS Receiver in a Humvee to conduct wellness checks to community members in Lancaster, S.C., March 7, as part of Vigilant Guard.



Photos by 1st Lt. Jessica Donnelly, unless otherwise noted



is a Joint Regional Training exercise program sponsored by U.S. Northern Command in conjunction with the National Guard Bureau. The exercise provides the National Guard an opportunity to improve cooperation and relationships with its regional civilian, military and federal partners in preparation for emergencies and catastrophic events.

More than 2,000 S.C. Soldiers, Airmen and State Guard members supported this exercise, including National Guard units from neighboring states of Georgia, North Carolina, Florida and Virginia. The South Carolina Emergency Management Division, county emergency management agencies, first responders and volunteers had more than 5,000 participants.

"We appreciate the support from the community during this training period," said Batts. "We could not execute Vigilant Guard without the commitment and dedication of the counties, state agencies and volunteers."

1. Members of the 228th TTSB prepare to conduct in-processing of out-of-state communications personnel during the Joint Reception Staging and Onward Integration to gather information on signal assets being brought into the state during Vigilant Guard, March 5, at McCrady Training Center in Eastover, S.C. (Photo by Capt. Brian Hare)

2. U.S. Army Sgt. Brian Lemieux, 228th Theater Tactical Signal Brigade supply sergeant, signs out communication equipment and a Combat Lifesaver bag to Soldiers conducting wellness checks to community members in Lancaster, S.C., March 7, as part of Vigilant Guard.

3. U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Jeff Goode, 228th Theater Tactical Signal Brigade Operations communications manager, prepares the Blue Force Tracker in a Humvee to conduct wellness checks to com-

munity members in Lancaster, S.C., March 7, as part of Vigilant Guard.

4. U.S. Army Soldiers with the 228th Theater Tactical Signal Brigade start the generator for the blower system attached to the Deployable Rapid Assembly Shelter to inflate the tent at the Anderson County Sheriff's Office Training Center in Anderson, S.C., March 7, as part of Vigilant Guard

5. A blower system is attached to the Deployable Rapid Assembly Shelter to inflate the tent at the Anderson County Sheriff's Office Training Center in Anderson, S.C., March 7, as part of Vigilant Guard.

6. Members of the 228th Theater Tactical Signal Brigade responded to a request by Anderson Emergency Management for a Deployable Rapid Assembly Shelter to be stood up at the Anderson County Sheriff's Office Training Center in Anderson, S.C., March 7, as part of Vigilant Guard.



# When Disaster Strikes

*A hurricane has hit the coast and tornadoes are forming on the western part of the state as a result. There are counties without power, buildings damaged, people missing and emergencies across the state. Thankfully this is all just an exercise called Vigilant Guard, an eight-day field exercise held March 5-12, which took place at numerous locations across South Carolina.*

This exercise tested the National Guard's abilities to support response operations based on simulated emergency scenarios, such as the landfall of a hurricane, a collapsed building, widespread fires and mass casualties. The National Guard, along with local, state and federal partners deployed to exercise venues in Georgetown, with other sites including Moncks Corner, Spartanburg, Greenville, Anderson, Florence, West Columbia and Williamsburg.

(Opposite page) A role player acts as a victim from a simulated hard landing made by a CH-47 Chinook. South Carolina National Guard units worked with local emergency management agencies and first responders during a mass casualty exercise (MASCAL) in Anderson, S.C., Mar. 10, 2015, which simulated the hard landing as a result of rough weather as part of Vigilant Guard. Vigilant Guard SC 15 is an eight-day field exercise held March 5-12. VG-15 takes place at numerous locations across South Carolina as the National Guard and its local and federal partners test their response readiness and capabilities to a simulated hurricane. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Roberto Di Giovine)



A firefighter with Anderson County Fire Department looks out over the scene from a simulated hard landing by a CH-47 Chinook during a mass casualty exercise in Anderson, S.C., Mar. 10, 2015, as part of Vigilant Guard.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Roberto Di Giovine



Photo by Staff Sgt. Roberto Di Giovine

First responders assess a victim from a simulated hard landing made by a CH-47 Chinook. South Carolina National Guard units worked with local emergency management agencies and first responders during a mass casualty exercise in Anderson, S.C., Mar. 10, 2015, which simulated the hard landing as a result of rough weather as part of Vigilant Guard.

# VIGILANT GUARD MASS CASUALTY EXERCISE



Photo by Senior Airman Christopher Reel

A CH-47 Chinook with the South Carolina Army National Guard prepares for takeoff after being loaded with simulated victims extracted from the old Woodmont High School, Mar. 10, in Greenville, S.C.



Photo by Senior Airman Christopher Reel

Greenville County search and rescue personnel make their way through the old Woodmont High School in search of simulated victims, Mar. 10, in Greenville, S.C.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Roberto Di Giovine



Victim role players have wounds and injuries applied to add a realistic aspect for the emergency personnel responding to the simulated hard landing of a CH-47 Chinook during a mass casualty exercise in Anderson, S.C., Mar. 10, 2015, as part of Vigilant Guard.

Bryan Tillirson, Anderson County Emergency Services coordinator, provides direction to the role players during the simulated hard landing.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Roberto Di Giovine



Photo by Senior Airman Christopher Reel

Simulated victims are loaded onto a CH-47 Chinook with the South Carolina Army National Guard after being extracted from the old Woodmont High School, Mar. 10, in Greenville, S.C.

# When Disaster Strikes: South Carolina National Guard strengthens partnerships, hones readiness

By Senior Airman Christopher Reel  
1st Combat Camera Squadron

**Greenville, S.C.**— South Carolina National Guard units worked with local emergency management agencies and first responders during a mass casualty exercise that covered both Greenville and Anderson, S.C., Mar. 10, 2015, as part of Vigilant Guard S.C. 2015.

“Vigilant Guard is a national-level exercise...Predominately, it focuses on defense support to civil authorities,” said Maj. Seth Horrell, 228th Theater Tactical Signal Brigade project officer. “This here, in Greenville and Anderson County, is just a small cross section of the state’s exercise.”

As part of the Vigilant Guard exercise, a simulated hurricane scenario started in the low-country along the state’s coast, before it worked its way inland, generating tornado-like conditions in the western region of the state, including Greenville and Anderson counties.

As a result, Greenville County simulated that tornado-strength winds caused a building, the old Woodmont High School, to collapse, trapping victims inside the rubble. Greenville emergency management agencies worked to evacuate the casualties from the building, assigned degrees of urgency for the wounds sustained and then flew them to a medical facility by a CH-47 Chinook, which flew in from the South Carolina Army National Guard’s Army Aviation Support Facility in Greenville. The county used their National Guard counterpart’s air assets due to Green-

ville County Hospital and medical assets being simulated as overtaxed as a result of the storm.

As the exercise continued, the helicopter used to evacuate the casualties simulated a malfunction due to weather and performed an emergency landing at Anderson Regional Airport, where more injuries were sustained in the hard landing. In addition to carrying out a mass casualty emergency response, Anderson County emergency personnel had to also respond to a hazardous material scenario due to the large amounts of fuel a CH-47 Chinook carries. The casualties from that scenario were then medically evacuated by South Carolina National Guard UH-72 La-

**“It is not just the tactics, techniques and procedures that we focused on throughout this; it’s the relationship aspect of this exercise that is important to us here in South Carolina,”**

**-Maj. Seth Horrell  
228th TTSB project officer**

kotas and AnMed Health LifeFlight helicopters to AnMed Health Medical Center, testing its emergency room and staff in a high-stress mass casualty scenario, as well.

“It is not just the tactics, techniques and procedures that we focused on throughout this; it’s the relationship aspect of this exercise that is important to us here in South Carolina,” said Horrell. “At the command level they are concerned with making sure we are able to react to a regional disaster; however, in addition to that, we are concerned with establishing those relationships between our military organizations and the civil and medical authorities in such a way that when

something does happen and the initial phone call goes out, they will know [the South Carolina National Guard] is there ready for their call.”

In a scenario like the one played out in Greenville and Anderson, it is also expected that land lines, cell towers and internet could be flooded with calls to 9-1-1 dispatchers or could be knocked off-line all together. In this instance, the 228th Theater Tactical Signal Brigade can assist with providing communication assets and aiding in the counties’ continuity of operations with an Incident Commander’s Command, Control and Communications Unit – a mobile communications trailer that can get the county back online with telephone, video and internet capabilities during an emergency.

“This exercise is a positive motivator to help relationships move forward,” said Bryan Tillirson, Anderson County Emergency Services coordinator, lead planner for this Vigilant Guard MASCAL exercise,

as well as a major in the 263rd Army Air and Missile Defense Command. “When you make those relationships and maintain those relationships, the interoperability is the easy part. But, when you don’t have that networking and partnership and when one agency comes to another, you won’t have an operational skillset. Us practicing and working together with our military partnerships prepares us for any future potential need. When that time comes, we will already have that interoperability piece and be able to work seamlessly together.”

Recently, the upstate put that relationship to the test in a real-world situation. After Gov. Nikki Haley de-

clared a state of emergency Feb. 25, 2015, as a result of impending hazardous weather, Greenville County civilian authorities called on their South Carolina Army National Guard partnership for the 228th TTSB to provide wrecker teams to stage along the highway to assist motorists during the predicted winter storm.

“You could tell right away that the interaction we had with these guys in preparation for this particular exercise allowed for things to go really well,” Horrell said. “We were able to communicate immediately, we knew exactly what we needed, they knew what they needed, and it was obvious that our interactions are already proving beneficial.”

In addition to building relationships and enhancing emergency response skills, there is more to be accomplished. “One of things that we’ve been starting to uncover here at my level...is that there are some things we can do to make our capabilities more applicable for our local civil authorities to be able to get it from us,” added Horrell. “I think our civil authorities are beginning to recognize that we are going to great lengths to make that capability available.”

Vigilant Guard S.C. was an eight-day field exercise held March 5-12, that took place at numerous locations across South Carolina and was used as a way for the National Guard and its local and federal partners to test their response readiness and capabilities to a simulated hurricane and the resulting situations.

Photos by Senior Airman Christopher Reel



(Top) AnMed Health LifeFlight personnel load a simulated victim onto a helicopter to transport to the AnMed Health Medical Center. (Bottom) An Anderson County first responder assesses a victim from a simulated hard landing made by a CH-47 Chinook. (Right) Greenville County search and rescue personnel make their way through the old Woodmont High School in search of simulated victims.



# South Carolina National Guard Best Warrior Competition

South Carolina's Best Warriors compete for top honors

By Sgt. Brad Mincey

108th Public Affairs Detachment

FORT JACKSON, S.C. – Some of the South Carolina Army National Guard's best non-commissioned officers and enlisted Soldiers from across the state gathered at the McCrady Training Center on Fort Jackson, Eastover, South Carolina, Jan. 30-Feb. 3 to compete against each other in the 2015 South Carolina National Guard Best Warrior Competition.

The five-day competition pitted Soldier against Soldier in

*Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Joe Cashion*



S.C. State Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Brickley (left) congratulates Sgt. Brian Lemieux for winning NCO of the Year honors at the 2015 S.C. National Guard's Best Warrior Competition. Lemieux will advance to represent South Carolina at the Region III competition later this year at St. Croix, Virgin Islands.

a variety of events that tested their physical stamina, mental sharpness and technical skills.

"The Best Warrior Competition is a state event that allows us to gauge the status of Soldiers physically and mentally," said Sgt. 1st Class Joan Keese, 218th Infantry Regiment. "Our Soldiers compete against each other at the state level, and the winner here will go on to represent South Carolina at the regional level."

The BWC competition consists of numerous events that test the competitor's knowledge and endurance. One of the first events is the Army Physical Fitness Test which started at 5 a.m. on the second day where Soldiers were tested on their physical fitness by measuring their ability to perform pushups, sit ups and a two-mile run.

Later that same day, the competitors went to the MOUT (Military Operations in Urban Terrain) near the McCrady site to demonstrate their knowledge in weapons and tactical movement.

"The Soldiers have to dismantle and put together a variety of weapons and then conduct a functions check on them," said Keese. "The Urban Ops is one of the most difficult sections because of all the different events that need to be completed. Once they complete the weapons section, they go through the MOUT site where they react to targets, make a MBITR-S radio function and throw grenades."

As they go through the site, competitors were presented with enemy and friendly targets and had to distinguish between them and react accordingly. Soldiers used UTM (Ultimate Training Munitions) rounds instead of blanks to

mark the targets with a chalk mark to designate a hit or miss.

In addition, the competitors also have to properly react to medical situations all while dealing with simulated explosions, smoke and threats from unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV). The UAV added one more distraction to an already stressful event.

"I'm piloting a RQ11-B Raven and seeing how they react to it as they go through the lanes at the MOUT site," said Sgt. 1st Class Gary Lain, 59th Aviation Troop Command. "The Raven is a two-man portable UAV that weighs 4.5 lbs. Its small, light weight and tactical and allows us to see the terrain without having to send up a piloted vehicle."

Day three consisted of qualifying with the M9 pistol and M4 carbine, a stress shoot and finished up with a ruck march.

Soldiers prepared for the competition in a variety of ways. Some, because of their military occupation specialties, perform these skills often. Others, who only serve during drill and annual training, have to make time in their busy schedules to train for the events.

"As an M-DAY (traditional) Soldier, I have to really work to find time to train around my civilian job," said Sgt. Seth Crosby, Company A, 218th Brigade Support Battalion, one of the BWC competitors. "I hit the gym, run when I can, and train whenever I can find the time."

Finally, when all of the events were completed and the results were tallied, the winners were announced at the BWC awards banquet Feb. 3.

"All of you did an outstanding job," said State Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Brickley. "You all came here as individuals but you're leaving as a well-oiled group. You came together as one, which is the American way, the enlisted way."

Garnering top honors for NCO of the Year was Sgt. Brian Lemieux of the 228th Signal Brigade.

"It was a fantastic competition," Lemieux said. "It was fun to do the Army stuff that you join to do. I would do it again in a heartbeat and hope I can do as well at the next level."

Winning the Enlisted Soldier of the Year title was Spc. Hunter Vaught of the 218th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade.

"The ruck march was the most difficult event of the competition but when we finished, we really had a sense of accomplishment," Vaught said. "I'm looking forward to the next level of competition and I hope we represent South Carolina very well."

Having won in South Carolina, Lemieux and Vaught earned their spots in the Region III Best Warrior Competition to be held at St. Croix, Virgin Islands, later this year.



(Left) Sgt. Barbara Creamer, 263rd Army Air & Missile Defense Command, conducts a dummy drag during the stress shoot event. (Bottom Left) Sgt. Lauren Rhodes, 59th Aviation Troop Command, high crawls under barbed wire (Bottom Right) Participants of the South Carolina Army National Guard's Best Warrior Competition fire M4 carbine rifles for the individual weapons qualification portion of the competition.

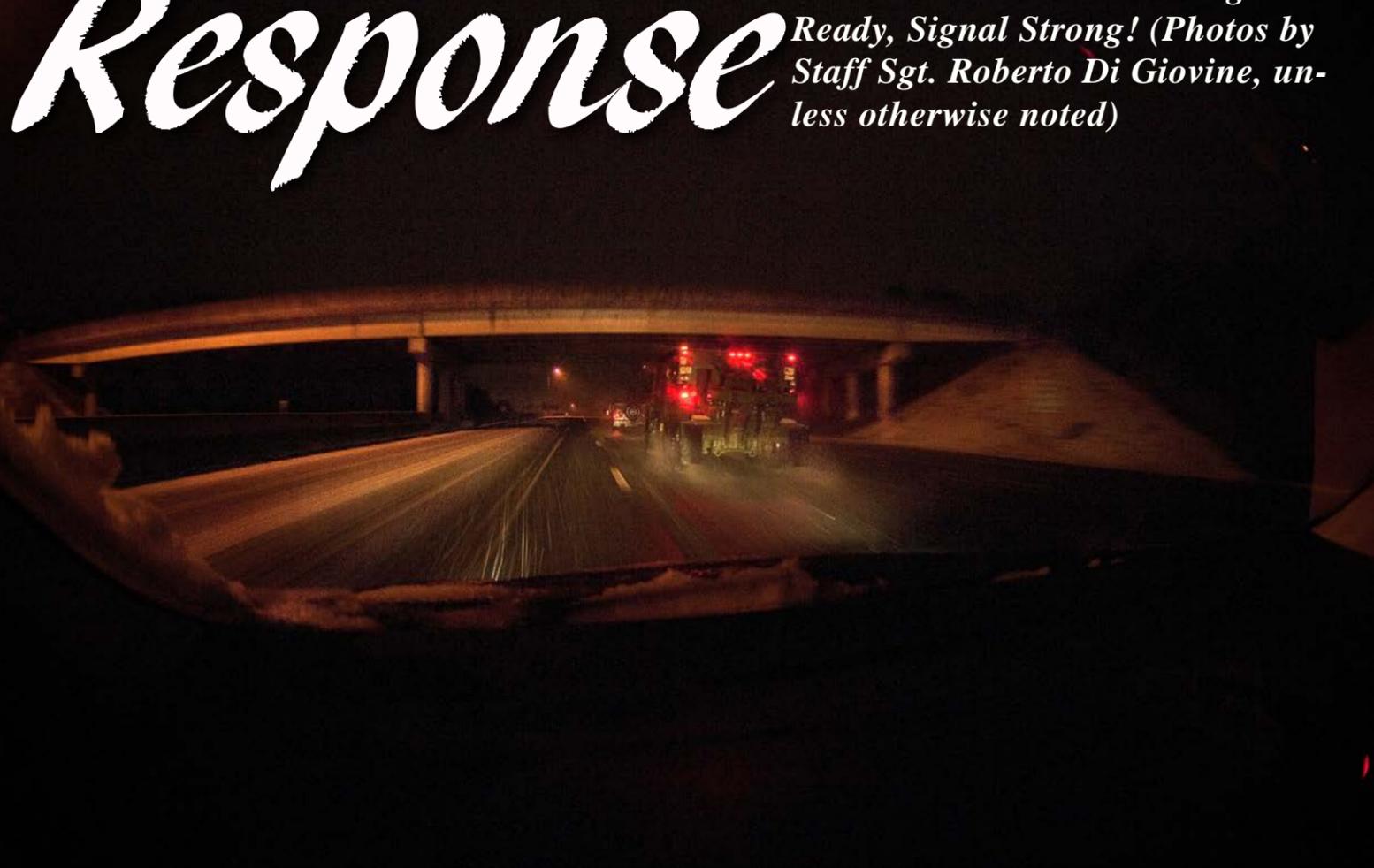




*Photo by Sgt. Bethany Witherington*

*The 228th Theater Tactical Signal Brigade answered the call to provide support to local law enforcement agencies in response to the anticipated snow storm expected to have hit the upstate Feb. 25 after a declaration of a state of emergency from Gov. Nikki Haley. The region did not receive the snow impacts predicted from the storm, but the Soldiers were staged to provide assistance where needed. Signal Ready, Signal Strong! (Photos by Staff Sgt. Roberto Di Giovine, unless otherwise noted)*

# *Winter Storm Response*





*The South Carolina Army National Guard conducted a deployment ceremony Feb. 15, at the Army Aviation flight facility at McEntire Joint National Guard base in Eastover, South Carolina to recognize more than 150 U.S. Soldiers leaving for a nearly yearlong deployment to Kuwait in support of Operation Spartan Shield under the 185th Theater Aviation Brigade. Approximately 20 U.S. Soldiers from the 228th Theater Tactical Signal Brigade, 151 Expeditionary Signal Battalion, Charlie Company will deploy alongside the 351st Aviation Support Battalion and will provide communications support while deployed. (Photos by Sgt. Bethany Witherington)*



## *228th TTSB chaplain says goodbye, leaves 'big shoes' to fill*

*By Sgt. Bethany Witherington*

SPARTANBURG, S.C. - After more than seven years with the 228th Theater Tactical Signal Brigade, the current brigade chaplain said goodbye to the unit as he takes the next step in his journey and career and welcomes the new chaplain in his place.

Maj. Charles Poore, 228th TTSB chaplain, attended his last drill with the brigade in February before transferring to the South Carolina National Guard Joint Forces Headquarters. Capt. Jim Major is the incoming brigade chaplain transferring from the 122nd Engineer Battalion.

While Poore prepares for his next assignment, he explained how much he enjoyed being part of the 228th and how the cama-

raderie within the brigade made him feel at home and made his experience much more enjoyable.

"These last two years at annual training, I have enjoyed learning from the Soldiers in the field," said Poore. "I would go out to see the Soldiers and ... watching their faces light up as they were telling me what they were doing, that is an experience I enjoy."

Poore also deployed with the brigade during his service and although it took him away from his own family, he enjoyed the experience because he was able to see and experience all of the different cultures.

Poore entered the South Carolina Army National Guard as a captain through direct commission, which he explained

was a challenge because he was expected to know things he did not know. However, Col. Wally Hall, 228th TTSB commander, said that Poore has progressed very well as a direct commission chaplain and would like to see him promoted to lieutenant colonel someday because he has fulfilled his duties as well as an officer with that rank.

As the brigade chaplain, Poore was responsible for the care and spiritual well-being of the Soldiers and their families, provided advice, conducted religious ceremonies, and assisted the command identifying Soldiers who may be struggling and help them get the support they needed.

"Chaplain Poore kept situations identified at manageable levels while they were being worked out," said Hall. "He is very good at his job".

However, being a chaplain is not always fun. Poore explained that there are times being a chaplain means seeing a Soldier or family member during a difficult time.

"One thing I like about chaplaincy is you get to deal with people in a very important part of their lives," said Poore. "To rejoice with people, you have to cry with people."

Although Poore is moving on to his next position, Major will remain to fill the spiritual need of the Soldiers and families in the brigade.

"His immediate loss is going to be felt," said Hall. "He left big shoes to fill. He impacted Soldiers at all levels."



*Maj. Charles Poore, outgoing 228th Theater Tactical Signal Brigade chaplain, stands with Capt. Jim Major, incoming 228th TTSB chaplain, during Poore's final drill with the unit in February at the University Readiness Center in Spartanburg, S.C.*

# SCENES FROM AROUND ANNUAL TRAINING

Photo by 1st Lt. Jessica Donnelly



*Nora Messick, Family Assistance Specialist, inventories items donated by the local Walgreens to be used for care packages for the Soldiers from the 228th Theater Tactical Signal Brigade, 151 Expeditionary Signal Battalion, Charlie Company that recently deployed alongside the 351st Aviation Support Battalion for a nearly yearlong deployment to Kuwait.*

Photo by Spc. Victoria Niemela



*Spc. Aaron Bradford, 228th Theater Tactical Signal Brigade motor pool, performs annual service to an M998 Humvee. The 228th Theater Tactical Signal Brigade motor pool keeps vehicles operational by providing routine and in-depth service as needed. This keeps the unit ready to respond to whatever mission arises.*

Photo by Spc. Victoria Niemela

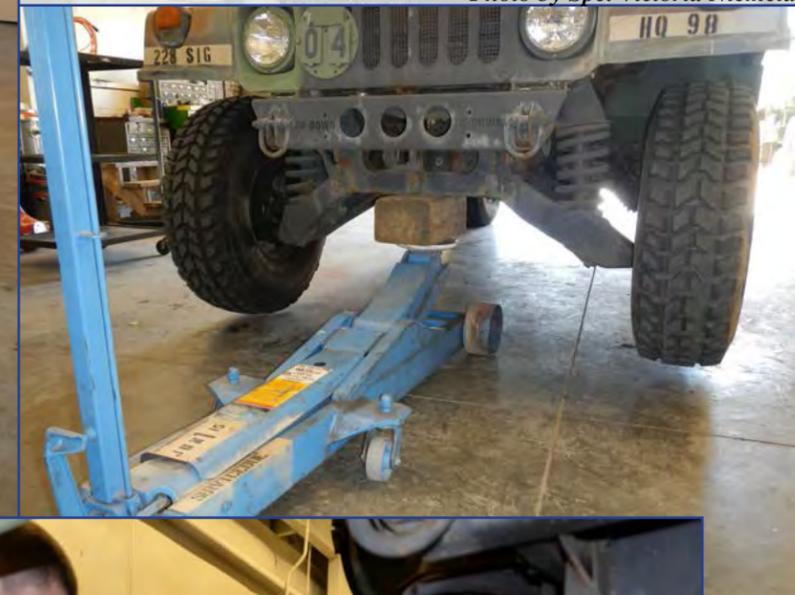


Photo by 1st Lt. Jessica Donnelly

# Final Frame

Photo by 1st Lt. Jessica Donnelly



*Sgt. Seth Crosby, 218th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, fires a M249 Squad Automatic Weapon during the stress shoot event of the of the S.C. Army National Guard's Best Warrior Competition at Fort Jackson, S.C. Feb. 1. Ten U.S. Soldiers from units across the state participated in the Best Warrior Competition, Jan. 30 - Feb. 3. Tasks included an essay, exam, APFT, Military Operations in Urban Terrain, obstacle course, individual weapons, stress shoot event, road march, land navigation and a Soldier's board of review.*

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## Signal Ready, Signal Strong



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