

HEADS UP!



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Very first GSDF Officer Candidate Class graduates

Nineteen GSDF troopers were the first-ever graduates from the State Defense Force's Officer Candidate School on January 22nd. The OCS students, who were selected from different GSDF brigades by a board of senior officers, had to complete a program that included six consecutive weekends of classroom and field training at the Georgia Military Institute/122nd Regiment RTI facility in Macon.



The nineteen officer candidates of GSDF OCS Class 06-01 received their commissions from BG Mike McGuinn in a ceremony at the Georgia Military Institute on Jan. 22nd, which was attended by nearly two hundred family members, friends, and other guests.

Classroom training focused at the GSDF OCS focused on leadership, land navigation, first aid, radio procedures, conducting military briefings, after action reporting, risk management, emergency management, METL development, and more. In addition to traditional drill and ceremony, field training included guard duty, leading physical training classes, and disaster response, the latter involving a situational training exercise where the candidates performed search & rescue, triage, and command operations as prescribed by FEMA's Incident Command System procedures.

The next GSDF OCS class begins in May, with boarding for new candidates currently ongoing.

School Commandant Capt. James Clifton led most of the classroom instruction for the OCS (right) while the officer candidates of Class 06-01 took copious notes (below). The students received instruction outside the classroom as well, such as an STX involving a post-natural disaster scenario (bottom).



Photos: 2LT Catherine Bates

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In Focus



In Focus this month: Georgia's 48th BCT

From Ga. ARNG PAO reports

Georgians from the 48th BCT continue to help Iraqi civilians in rebuilding their country, as they approach the end of their deployment to the combat theater.

One small but important act of assistance occurred last month as members of the 48th ARNG delivered new shoes to children in An Nasiriyah, which will allow the youngsters to attend school - in Iraq the students aren't allowed into the classroom unless properly dressed, and some families cannot afford even a simple pair of shoes for their children.

The supply of shoes for little feet was acquired when the 48th teamed up with Air Force Maj. Steve Kassebaum of the Defense Contract Management Agency. Maj. Kassebaum had secured thirty cartons of shoes from the Nike corporation, but had no way to deliver them. Thus the 48th BCT Civil Affairs section stepped in to help.

According to SSG Britt Smith, "Lines formed as the cartons were opened and children from 6 to 16 crowded around the soldiers as they made every effort to fit the children feet, with the correct size shoe. The scene was reminiscent of parents stateside, preparing their own children for the first day of school."

A soldier from Jesup, Spc. Daniel Larson, said that "We are making friends for life and that's great for us here and for Americans back home."



Spc. Sam Rogers with the 48th BCT Headquarters Co. gets a warm hug of thanks from a young Iraqi girl after the 48th delivered new shoes to schoolchildren at the Abu Tubar School near An Nasiriyah in southern Iraq

Photo: Britt Smith, 48th BCT PAO

3rd Brigade honors retiring GSDF troopers

By Capt. Alton Suggs, 3rd Medical Company

3rd Brigade hosted a Retirement Ceremony on February 11th for retiring 3rd Brigade soldiers from 2005. The 3rd Medical Company joined in the celebration to honor distinguished retirees such as Colonel Leon Curry and Major Charles Crawford. Lt. Col. Ron Ledford presided at the ceremony and spoke of patriotism and willingness to serve in honor and tribute to the retirees.

3rd Brigade soldiers as well as 3rd Medical Company troops stood in formation in tribute and respect to these retiring heroes. In addition, SSG Keven Leasure explained a GSDF tribute in which the retirees names would be added to the flag flown over the state capitol in honor of their service. This is a highly prestigious tribute and honored tradition for our GSDF retirees.



Members of the 3rd Brigade and 3rd Medical Company gather to pay tribute to GSDF retirees such as Col. Leon Curry, a physician who served with the 3rd MedCo (formerly known as the Air Medical Detachment) as Chief of Professional Services.

Photo: CPT Alton Suggs

Immediately following the ceremony a light reception was conducted and the soldiers greeted the retirees with handshakes and impromptu photos with these retiring GSDF leaders.

Friends and family of GSDF members prepared a banquet style buffet in which all the retirees and soldiers enjoyed and gathered around sharing stories of past missions, conquests, and memorable moments with the past GSDF leaders.

Capt. Alton Suggs, CO of 3rd MedCo, said they would miss "their trusted friend, and beloved leader, Col. Curry. His distinguished military career encompassed over 40 years of honorable service." Prior to joining GSDF, Col. Curry had served with the US Army Reserve Medical Service Corps, and was deployed to South Vietnam in 1965-66 as Commander of the 8th Medical Detachment.

*We welcome your comments! Please send letters, story ideas, etc to the Editor:
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