



# MISSISSIPPI STATE HOSPITAL

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## **For Immediate Release**

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## **MISSISSIPPI STATE HOSPITAL HONORS MEMORIAL DAY, VETERANS**

WHITFIELD—Mississippi State Hospital patients, residents and staff members joined together on Thursday, May 27 in recognition of Memorial Day, taking time to honor and remember those who have given the ultimate sacrifice to serve their country and those who have served in the military.

Veterans from all branches of military service attended the ceremony, with the Northwest Rankin High School JROTC Color Guard presenting the flag. Mississippi National Guard Lt. Col. Donald Malin, a chaplain with the 168<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade, was the keynote speaker for the ceremony. He served in Iraq in 2003-2004, and just recently returned from Afghanistan.

Malin spoke about a young lieutenant he met while serving. Shortly before going out on a mission, the lieutenant visited Malin and asked for prayer while he and his troops were on the battlefield. When Malin heard several troops had been injured, and one killed, he was told that young lieutenant had died protecting his troops, pushing them out of the way of an insurgent attack.

“Tears definitely came to my eyes at that point. He had a family. He had a wife. He had a daughter on the way, and he was going to be going home on leave,” Malin said. “The story the soldiers told me was that he was a hero.

“Thank you. Thank you for your service,” he told those patients, residents and staff members who are veterans. “We need you and we need your service.”

Malin also spoke about the importance making sure those coming back from active service have the support they need to adjust back to civilian life. Operational stress and combat stress make it difficult to adjust back to the way things were before deployment, he said.

“They leave the warzone, but the warzone doesn’t leave them,” Malin said. “Because they put their life on the line for our country, because they put their life on the line for us, they deserve the best we can give them.”

Before Malin spoke, Anthony Kinnard, assistant chief of the MSH police department and a retiree from the United States Air National Guard, led the crowd in the pledge of allegiance, and Bridgett Shield, an MSH psychologist associate, sang the Star-Spangled Banner. MSH Director James G. Chastain read a letter from Gov. Haley Barbour remembering those who have fallen and thanking those who served in the military. Afterwards, MSH Nurse Administrator Rhonda Galloway, who serves in the US Army Reserve, recognized each branch of the service.

MSH Volunteer Program Manager Lynn Dilmore said many people on the hospital campus wanted to pay special honor to the veterans and service men and women who have given so much of themselves so the rest of us could enjoy freedom.

“We can’t give enough thanks,” Dilmore said. “But from all of those who work here, and all of those who live here, we want to thank everyone for their service.”

*MSH, a facility of the Mississippi Department of Mental Health, was founded in 1855 and facilitates improvement in the quality of life for Mississippians who are in need of mental health, chemical dependency or nursing home services, by rehabilitating to the least restrictive environment, utilizing a range of psychiatric and medical services, which reflect the accepted standard of care and are in compliance with statutory and regulatory guidelines. The hospital is accredited by the Joint Commission.*

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**PHOTOS ATTACHED:**

**1: The Northwest Rankin High School JROTC Color Guard presented the flag at the Memorial Day and veterans recognition program at Mississippi State Hospital on Thursday, May 27.**

**2: Pictured are (l to r) MSH Director James G. Chastain, MSH Nurse Administrator Rhonda Galloway, MSH Assistant Police Chief Anthony Kinnard, MSH Psychologist Associate Bridgett Shield and Mississippi National Guard Lt. Col. Donald R. Malin, who was the keynote speaker at the recognition ceremony.**