



November 10, 2025

Veterans honored during program at Walnut Grove

WALNUT GROVE – Employees and inmates at the Walnut Grove Correctional Facility were recognized and honored Monday for their military service.

The state prison in southern Leake County held a Veterans Day program to thank five inmates for their service made before their incarceration. Two of the inmates served in the regular Army, two served in the Army National Guard, and one inmate served in the Navy.

Employees attending the program stood to announce their names and branch of service including two representatives of the Army National Guard, Air Force, two regular Army, and a Marine.

The inmates were also presented with specially designed shirts made by Phyllis Bell Lockett, principal of the elementary school in Carthage where students made cards saluting and congratulating the inmate veterans.

Other Veterans Day related activities include a program planned for Friday, Nov. 14, at South Mississippi Correctional Institution.

Jackie Thompson, PREA director for the facility who coordinated the program, gave the keynote address in lieu of the scheduled speaker who was unable to attend.

“People may ask ‘is it ok to honor incarcerated veterans?’ My answer is yes. Absolutely yes. Incarcerated veterans are fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters who have made bad choices in life for whatever their reasons may have been,” Thompson said. “My goal is to help them never make that choice again. We should support incarcerated veterans by not dismissing their service. Despite being incarcerated, there was a time when they set aside their own lives to serve this country and it shouldn’t be forgotten.

Following the playing of “Taps” and presentations to the inmates, Deputy Commissioner for Institutions John Hunt, a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps – Parris Island, offered additional words of support for the inmate veterans, noting their contributions before their incarceration should not go unnoticed. He was accompanied by Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration Derrick Garner.

“I want to thank everyone for your service and I appreciate everything you do. You kept us safe and we greatly appreciate that,” Hunt said.



Posting of colors



Keynote speaker – Jackie Thompson, MDOC PREA



Five inmate veterans were honored



Superintendent Mike Dixon



Lynnette Benton and other MDOC employees who served in military were honored



Other inmates were invited to program



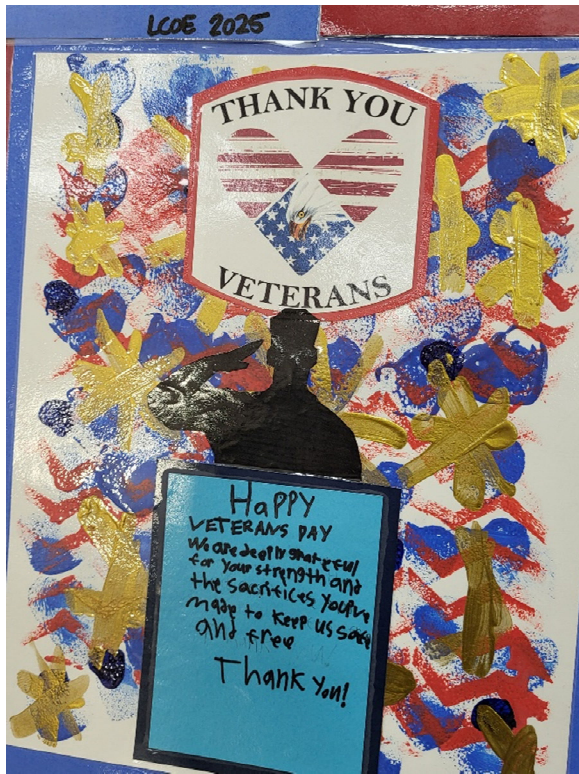
Deputy Commissioner for Institutions John Hunt offered support



Warden Vincent Carter, Deputy Commissioner Derrick Garner, Finance and Administration; Deputy Commissioner Hunt



Specially designed insignia was featured on MDOC shorts presented to incarcerated inmates who served in the military.



Elementary school students in Carthage designed special cards to the five inmate veterans who were presented gifts during Veterans Day program.

