

MyrtleBeachOnline.com

[Next Story >](#)

Rice has done little for God's least brethren

Volunteers

Letter | SC guard volunteers train to help state's communities

Published: October 15, 2013

[Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Google Plus](#) [Reddit](#) [E-mail](#) [Print](#)

By Richard Eckstrom

Here in South Carolina, where we are relieved to be nearing the end of another quiet hurricane season, we recently witnessed the destructive force of torrential rainfalls.

Almost as devastating as the physical property loss in a flood is the emotional impact of seeing your home damaged or destroyed. We've all seen these tragic stories on TV: home improvement projects ruined and washed away, priceless family photos and heirlooms lost, and on and on.

It's times like these when helping hands mean so much, and I'm proud to share just such a story that recently unfolded in the Upstate.

You may recall, and definitely you will recall if you live in the region, the northwestern part of South Carolina experienced a couple days of torrential rainfall in mid-July. A weather system had stalled over the Upstate, hanging on like a stubborn summer cold, and dumped drenching rains.

It didn't take long for the ground to saturate, rivers and creeks to fill and then overflow, creating floods that swamped many homes, some with as much as 4 feet of water. Some residents were forced to evacuate.

As the waters receded, helping hands from the S.C. State Guard arrived. State Guard members are your neighbors and they're volunteers who receive no pay for the services they perform.

In this particular crisis, members of the State Guard's newly-formed Engineering Detachment responded in a section of the Upstate that had suffered the brunt of the flooding. These highly-skilled professional engineers arrived to assess structural damage.

Maj. George McCall, Capt. Lee Genoble and 1st Lt. Bill Sykes, all State Guard engineers residing in Greenville County, took on the task.

Maj. McCall, the team leader and officer in charge of the State Guard's Engineering Detachment, described the events in the latest quarterly edition of the S.C. Military Department's newsletter:

"Once we received the call for assistance, we quickly assembled our team and mobilized on site," Maj. McCall said. "Having already established a great working relationship with emergency management personnel in Greenville County, we were able to react quickly to seamlessly work alongside local authorities."

Local officials and grateful homeowners accompanied the State Guard members as they evaluated flooded residences. The engineers documented that six homes had sustained damage equaling more than 50 percent of their value. One of the six had been rendered uninhabitable.

Many other homes also were damaged, but not as badly. Some lost air conditioning systems that had been in crawl spaces. "The water rose so fast and with such force that the community was lucky more extensive damage didn't occur," Maj. McCall said.

This is the kind of selfless and often unheralded work that the State Guard performs all across South Carolina.

Please allow me to say, as commander of the State Guard, that I take great pride in all of the devoted volunteers who fill our ranks.

Some 850 members strong, they are unpaid, citizen volunteers – men and women, old and young – who stand ready at a moment's notice to apply their training and skills in responding to natural or manmade disasters.

An arm of the S.C. Military Department, the State Guard trains constantly to protect lives and property.

I know that we all face lots of demands on our time. But I also know we live in communities that often face unexpected threats. If you're looking for a truly rewarding experience – one that can help fulfill a desire to serve your fellow citizens – I highly encourage you to look into joining us in the State Guard.

If you provide a sound body and willing heart, we'll provide the uniforms and equipment.

Eckstrom, a CPA, is the comptroller general of South Carolina and commander of the S.C. State Guard.

[Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Google Plus](#) [Reddit](#) [E-mail](#) [Print](#)
[< Previous Story](#)



[Next Story >](#) **Letters | The fairness of locals discounts; America's corporations need to add jobs in U.S.**

Rice has done little for God's least brethren

Join The Conversation

Myrtle Beach Sun News is pleased to provide this opportunity to share information, experiences and observations about what's in the news. Some of the comments may be reprinted elsewhere in the site or in the newspaper. We encourage lively, open debate on the issues of the day, and ask that you refrain from profanity, hate speech, personal comments and remarks that are off point. Thank you for taking the time to offer your thoughts.

[Commenting FAQs](#) | [Terms of Service](#)

[Today's Circulars](#)