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Annotated article by Anthony Harrigan to Charleston News and Courier, 30 September 1962

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A task force of 200 U.S. marshals arrived here by air this afternoon. A task force of 200 U.S. marshals, armed with gas grenades and clubs and wearing steel helmets, arrived here by air this afternoon and were taken on army trucks to the Ole Miss campus with the apparent consent of Mississippi authorities.

Accompanying the contingent of marshals, headed by Chief U.S. Marshal Jim McShane, was a group of top Justice Department aides who form the high command for Operation Oxford. Military jets circled the field several times as the marshals dearked and lined up in formation.


The marshals have taken up positions around the Lyceum, the imposing white-columned structure that houses the regista's office.

As dusk begins to fall over this town, state police—who have been absent from the community—are moving back onto the campus.

In the police automobiles, the state patrolman are carrying riot guns and extra uniforms, as though they were planning on a long siege. All signs point to continuing state resistance Monday morning when it is presumed another attempt will be made to register James Meredith, 29-year-old Negro.

The town is quiet, though crowded with automobiles and local citizens doing some sightseeing at the railroad bridge leading onto the campus. The university grounds have been closed to public and press since 2:30 p.m., when the first unmarked aircraft, carrying
the marshals landed at the Oxford airfield. Only students and faculty members are allowed to pass the university gates.

State Police The movement of marshals to the campus

There is no indication whatever that the admission of the marshals to the campus indicates any weakening of resolve on the part of the State of Mississippi. Aside from the fresh police movements, it is evident that the elaborate federal military arrangements would be necessary if the state were about to back down on its refusal to admit a Negro student.

Deputy Atty. Gen. Katzenbach phoned higher authority as soon as his Air Force jet transport landed. A scratch pad he carried into the glass-walled telephone booth carrying the penciled notation: "First tent camp established," indicated that the government plans an additional bivouac area for its forces and possibly a long occupation.

No hoisting greeted the marshals or Justice Department officials marshals arrived. The crowd of several hundred persons gathered around the small airport building were restrained. One citizen called out, "Why don't you bring Kennedy down here?"

Another said to a friend: "You work your back off paying taxes, and this is what you get.

A number of students were in the crowd that watched the military preparations on the airfield. One of them turned to a reporter and said: "You fellows aren't interested in human relations. The saddest thing around is the bootlegger who is afraid he will go broke if he can't get on campus."

State police on the highway road leading to the university had matters firmly in hand. "I have a job to do and I am going to do," a policeman said when an out-of-town newspaperman tried to get through...
police lines. Newsmen who tried to reach the campus by going through the woods were taken in tow by state officers positioned in the wooded areas.

All signs point to state readiness for tomorrow's developments. No effort has been made to welcome out-of-state groups that wanted to "help out" at Oxford. This is a contest over principle between the state of Mississippi and the federal government, and Mississippi intends to keep it that way. Miss. Gen. Edwin A. Walker, who resigned from the Army after a clash with the Kennedy administration policies, arrived in Oxford before noon. But there is no evidence that he is representing the State of Mississippi in any way.

Saturday night was a night of rejoicing for Mississippians as they hailed Gov. Ross Barnett's firm stand against what they regard as unconstitutional federal interference in the operation of Mississippi's educational system. But the excitement of Saturday night turned to grave concern Sunday morning when Mississippians learned of President Kennedy's federalizing the state's national guard and dispatching regular army troops to establish a base north of Oxford.

By nine a.m., Mississippi National Guardsmen were beginning to arrive at armories throughout the state. In Oxford, arriving at the armory in the state capital, this reporter encountered officers of the 134th Surgical Hospital Mobile Army Unit. One of the officers, questioned as he stepped out of his automobile in front of the armory, voiced resentment at the call up. "This is the Kennedy Reconstruction. We won't forget it," he said.
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But the Guardsmen, though under federal orders, seem far from being reconstructed. Parked in front of the 3rd B Battery of the 3rd Howitzer Battalion in Durant, Miss., was a National Guard jeep that flew Confederate flags from its front bumper and a tall radio aerial at the rear of the vehicle.

Three Mississippi National Guard units, comprising more than 2,000 men have been ordered to report to the Oxford area by 10 a.m. tomorrow. But the federal government is not placing primary reliance on these units whose members oppose the government action at Ole Miss. The views of the guard members may be gauged by the bumper strips on their cars parked outside the armories--strips that read: "Help Ross Barnett keep Mississippi sovereign."

Ministers of many Mississippi churches took note of the struggle in their sermons today. The minister of Galloway Methodist Church in Jackson voiced a prayer for freedom from tension and strife.

The federal government is playing its intervention in Mississippi very cool. Federal representatives are apparently very desirous not to have the image of another Little Rock get across to the public. This can be seen in the movement of marshals in unmarked aircraft, rather than Army planes. Army forces are kept away from the town as much as possible. An Army public information officer went to considerable lengths to keep the press away from the town as much as possible.
Airborne Division—which fought the battle of Little Rock in 1958—is here represented only by individual officers and men, not actual division units.

Another public relations move by the federal authorities is the assignment of an all-white group of U. S. marshals. Though the government is seeking integration at Ol Miss, its task force of marshals and Justice Department officials lacks even token integration.

Anthony Harrison