

**Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
2015 Law Enforcement of the Year Award**

Nominee's Information:

Name: Michael Strickland

Position/Title: Senior Master Sergeant

Agency/Department: Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

Mailing Address: 1141 Bayview Ave Biloxi, MS
39530

Phone: 228-374-5000

Email: mike.strickland@dmr.ms.gov

Nominator's Information:

Name: Rusty Pittman

Position/Title: Lt. Colonel Assistant Chief of Enforcement

Agency/Department: Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

Mailing Address: 1141 Bayview Ave Biloxi, MS
39530

Phone: 228-523-4132

Email: rusty.pittman@dmr.ms.gov

Please use no more than one page to respond to the following three items.
Attach your response to this cover sheet and mail to:

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
c/o Charlene Ponce/Phyllis Miranda
2203 N. Lois Avenue, Suite 1100

Tampa, FL 33607

Nominations may also be submitted by fax to: 813-648-1711, or emailed to:
gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org.

1. Describe the nominee's current responsibilities.
2. Describe the nominee's significant contribution(s) to fisheries enforcement.
3. Describe specific qualities that make the nominee deserving of this award.

I hereby affirm that the information submitted herein is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I am aware that if any of the information provided is found to be inaccurate or untruthful, this nomination shall be removed from consideration for this award.

Nominator's Signature:  Date: 2/11/2016

On July 9, 2015 Officer Michael Strickland conducted a fisheries compliance boarding of F/V Southern Pride while on an offshore patrol as part of MDMR's Joint Enforcement Agreement with NOAA. During the course of the boarding Strickland determined the captain was in possession of three thousand five hundred pounds of shrimp illegally harvested in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone. The vessel had harvested the shrimp with an expired Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Moratorium Permit. Further investigation revealed the captain of the vessel was cited for the same offense once prior. Due to Strickland's diligence while conducting a JEA fisheries boarding a repeat offender is facing enhanced penalties.

Senior Master Sergeant Michael Strickland has served the State of Mississippi as a Mississippi Department of Marine Resources Marine Patrol Officer since 2011. In his five years with Marine Patrol, SMSgt. Strickland has advanced quickly through the ranks due to his leadership, proactive approach to patrol and ability to work effectively in the ever changing environment of maritime law enforcement. As a Marine Patrol Officer, SMSgt. Strickland is responsible for boating safety and conservation enforcement in three coastal counties that include 359 miles of coastline, 1,298 square miles of waterways and a multitude of rivers, bayous and tidally influenced bays and estuaries. Additionally, Strickland is a first line supervisor responsible for the guidance and leadership of other Marine Patrol Officers.

SMSgt. Strickland readily embraces his leadership role and plays an active part in the training and career development of his fellow officers. He is a Field Training Officer (FTO), NRA Small Arms Instructor, State Boating Safety Course Instructor and NASBLA Seated Field Sobriety Instructor. As an FTO, SMSgt. Strickland not only trains Marine Patrol Cadets and Marine Patrol Reserve Officers, but aided in the development and implementation of a new Field Training Program. SMSgt. Strickland is responsible for semiannual in-service firearms training for all Marine Patrol Officers. In addition, he is an adjunct instructor at the local law enforcement training academy and has taught Federal, State and local law enforcement officers.

In calendar year 2015, SMSgt. Strickland logged a total of 463 hours of underway patrol, 1447 vessel stops, 29 Boating Safety related citations and 62 other criminal citations. He led the agency in BUI arrests, having effected 17 and carries a 100% conviction rate. SMSgt. Strickland also assisted numerous other Marine Patrol Officers conduct BUI investigations and search and rescue operations.

In addition to his tireless boating safety efforts, SMSgt. Strickland also participated in resources related patrols through MDMR's Joint Enforcement Agreement with the National Marine Fisheries Service. On July 9, 2015 Strickland conducted a fisheries compliance boarding on F/V Southern Pride. During the course of the boarding it was determined the captain had illegally harvested 3,500 pounds of shrimp in Federal waters without a Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Moratorium Permit. Subsequent investigation revealed the captain of the vessel had prior citations for the same offense. During the same patrol Strickland also cited a commercial Menhaden vessel for illegal possession of Red Drum.

We trust you will agree SMSgt. Strickland is an asset to Mississippi. We feel fortunate to have such a dedicated Marine Patrol Officer on patrol. SMSgt. Michael Strickland truly embodies the MDMR's motto of ENHANCE PROTECT CONSERVE. He is a stellar example of a Marine Patrol Officer committed to enhancing the waterways of the State of Mississippi; protecting her citizens and conserving her natural and human resources.