

CASE STUDY: SMITH COUNTY, TEXAS



From Paper Logs to 99.9% Compliance: How Smith County, Texas, Transformed Jail Operations with Command Cloud



"The Smith County Jail in Tyler, Texas (United States)" by Michael Barera is licensed under CC BY 4.0.

About Smith County Jail

Located 100 miles east of Dallas on Interstate 20 in Tyler, Texas, the Smith County Sheriff's Office jail holds up to roughly 1,150 inmates. Lt. Lonnie Kettler, who has over 20 years in law enforcement, oversees the facility's operations, which includes a dedication to modernizing operations.

"In the past, the officers spent a lot more time here concentrating on paperwork rather than the important things, which is the family that's at home," Kettler said.

99% COMPLIANCE
since switching to
GUARDIAN RFID

2,920 HOURS SAVED
by command staff members
since 2022

100% IMPROVEMENT
in out-of-cell time tracking since
migration to Command Cloud

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The Challenge

When Kettler joined Smith County in 2021, it was common for her and the sergeants on her staff to spend 45 minutes to two hours of overtime per shift trying to decipher handwritten paper-work. An already-taxing work environment frequently ate into valuable family time. For four years, the jail had failed to meet Texas Commission on Jail Standards compliance benchmarks.

At that time, the facility deployed outdated pen-and-paper logging protocols alongside a guard tour system that Kettler almost immediately recognized as unreliable. Repeated hardware failures and worn-out, wall-mounted memory buttons led leadership to often revert to 100% written logs, which are easy to falsify and even more susceptible to human error.



"Writing stuff down all day was really tedious," said Assistant Jail Administrator Captain Marvin Martin, "and then you always run out of ink."

Further complications arose when Kettler attempted to address the failures of its guard tour system. She was met with "condescending" customer service and was unable to easily obtain in-person training to tackle the issues, she said.

Determined to modernize the jail's operations, Kettler attended the 2022 Sheriffs' Association of Texas Annual Training Conference and Expo and searched for a solution.

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The Solution

The controlled chaos of corrections puts any inmate management device through its paces. Today at Smith County, that means ultra-rugged Android SPARTANs dropped down drains, falling in milk buckets, or being left on vehicle dashboards in the Texas sun.

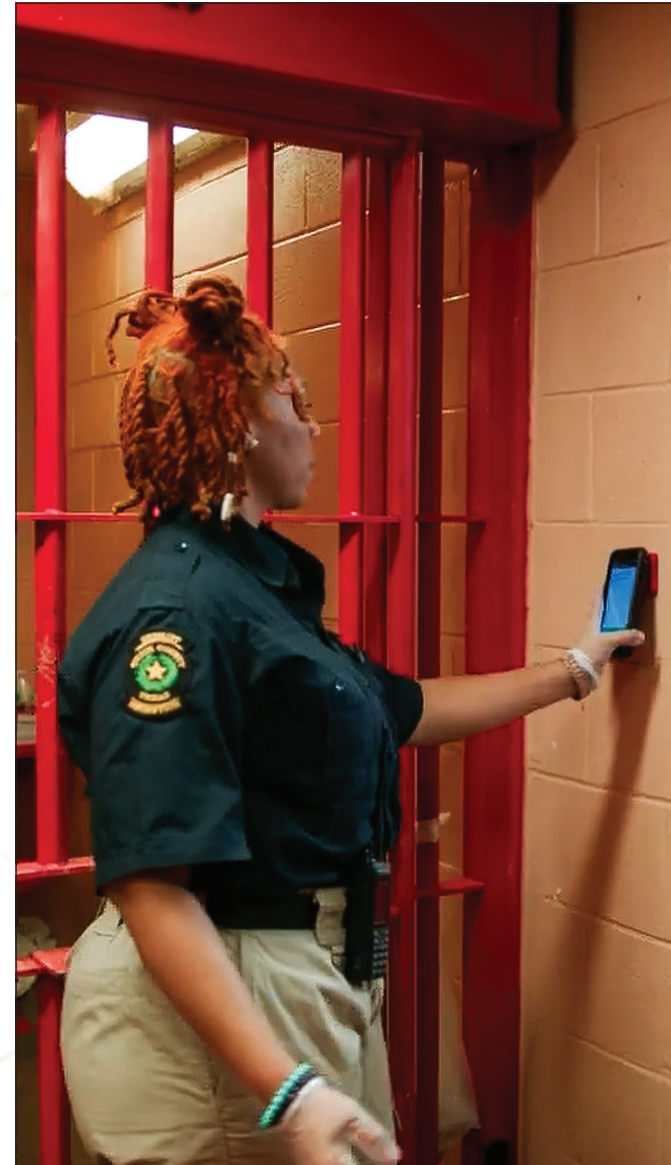
They pick that SPARTAN up, and they feel empowered.

LT. LONNIE KETTLER

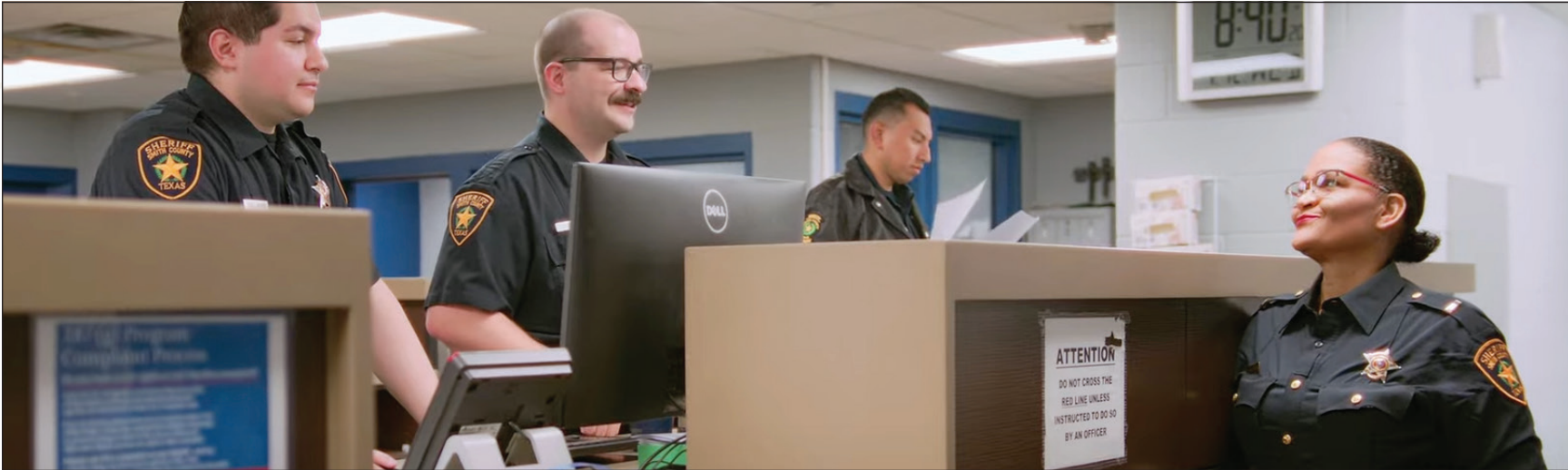
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But Kettler knew a long time ago GUARDIAN RFID's mobile inmate tracking devices can withstand just about anything. During a demonstration of the company's technology at that sheriffs' expo, she and Sheriff Larry R. Smith asked a GUARDIAN RFID employee to stress-test the SPARTAN by dropping it on the floor. When it didn't break, and the employee courteously obliged, "it made a believer out of me," Kettler said.

Beyond the hardware's durability, the facility gained the ability to record, track, and analyze all inmate data, from security rounds to real-time reporting and everything in between. In January 2026, Smith County upgraded from GUARDIAN RFID's legacy OnDemand software to its officer experience platform, Command Cloud, and the jail's operations have improved even more, Kettler said.



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'Being the Change'

On Mother's Day in 2016, Kettler's son was killed in a car accident. While its scars will remain with her and her family forever, the tragedy brought her and her daughter extraordinarily close.

"My daughter is my greatest cheerleader, and she told me something one day, and I try to live by this: 'Be the change you want to see,' right?" Kettler said. "If I want a positive impact, I've got to *make* a positive impact."

For Kettler, that goes beyond mere metrics. It means taking care of her team – and those in its charge.

"I've got to try to figure out 'how can I reach this [inmate] and give them something to look forward to?'" Kettler said. "You try to be that positive influence to where you take some of the negative away and put a little positivity so they can start looking at things differently."

And modernized technology built specifically for the officer experience allows leaders to shift their focus from manual reporting and back to their officers and inmate population.

Does it make an impact? I know it does. Perfect system. It's just – I can't say enough. I'll start crying if I keep talking.

LT. LONNIE KETTLER

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In practice, that has translated to Smith County achieving:

- **Jail Commission Compliance:**

Consistent 99.04% to 99.99% compliance ratings from January 2023 to January 2026

- **Massive Time Savings:**

An estimated 2,920 total staff hours saved by eliminating manual paper log recording, review, and reporting since going live in 2022

- **Life-Saving Interventions:**

A noticeable reduction in inmate suicide and self-harm attempts due to the SPARTAN's audio and vibration alerts that force officers to stay active and on schedule with their checks

- **Flawless Tracking:**

A 100% improvement on out-of-cell time tracking after switching to Command Cloud



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Kettler said the ability to capture digital evidence by recording video at the point of responsibility has been particularly helpful, both from the liability and officer accountability perspectives. Additionally, the system's talk-to-text capabilities have streamlined the process of recording inmate observations, ensuring that documentation is as efficient as it is accurate.

Kettler even uses Command Cloud as a recruitment tool, a strategic advantage in an industry facing chronic staffing shortages. "It's another selling point that we have in the job market," she says. "You don't want a job that's going to take you away from your home and your family. ... I can see the difference in our staff. Even the line staff, they're much more happy. They think Lt. Kettler is the best thing since sliced bread. But it's not me; it's [GUARDIAN RFID]."

GUARDIAN RFID is a member of the Amazon Web Services (AWS) Partner Network (APN) and the AWS Public Sector Partner (PSP) Program.

Command Cloud is built from the ground up on a modern technology stack to protect and empower America's Thin Gray Line.



Command Cloud is deployed securely in the Cloud in partnership with AWS, the most trusted and broadly adopted Cloud platform, using a number of AWS cloud services, including AWS GovCloud (US), Amazon EC2, Amazon EBS, Amazon SageMaker, Amazon GuardDuty, Amazon CloudWatch, and AWS Lambda.

Together, these services enable Command Cloud to meet the growing technology needs of Warriors while maintaining a strong security posture that maintains the integrity of Criminal Justice Information Systems (CJIS) Security Policy compliance.