

Louisiana National Guard shoves man to ground on Bourbon Street, raising questions about practices

By David Hammer, *February 16, 2026*



It was about 7 a.m. Sunday, as crews cleaned up from a busy night on Bourbon Street, when Louisiana National Guard soldiers shoved a man to the ground, leading to questions from one state lawmaker about how the guard is trained.

To understand what happened, WWL Louisiana watched and listened to more than 30 minutes of video, both leading up to and following the incident, which was all captured by EarthCam, a live view of the corner of Bourbon and St. Peter streets streamed 24/7 on the internet.

A spokesman for the Louisiana National Guard on Sunday evening would not provide names of the guardsmen involved or provide information about the guard's policies or procedures for de-escalation or interactions with the public, only saying "the Louisiana National Guard is working in support of law enforcement and will not comment on ongoing operations."

The spokesman added that guardsmen assigned to the city are "commissioned law enforcement officers" based on state law.

The spokesman did not respond Monday to an additional request for comment and information from WWL, but the Guard posted the [video](#) and a message on its Facebook page Monday evening.

"We know this video is circulating. Louisiana National Guardsmen responded accordingly with proper escalation and continue to safeguard the public during Mardi Gras events," the post said. "We remind the public that Guardsmen on mission in New Orleans are commissioned law enforcement officers by R.S. 29. Be smart, be respectful, and look out for one another."

Based on a recording of the incident posted online, three members of the Louisiana National Guard were standing at the corner directly under the camera when Rob Corroza, owner of High Grace, a bar just off of Bourbon Street, came over to offer his support.

"We told them, if you want any Red Bulls, waters or the bathroom, they're more than welcome to come here. My staff knows to give them everything for free," Corroza told WWL Louisiana on Monday afternoon.

That's when one guardsman turned to look at someone further up St. Peter Street.

Corroza immediately explained to the guardsmen that he thought the man had cerebral palsy, a childhood neurological disorder that often causes brain damage and spasticity. Corroza later told WWL he does not know the man but said he told the guardsmen he had cerebral palsy in hopes they would be “gentle with him.” He said he was comfortable after years of working in the hospitality industry that the man was not intoxicated.

“No, no, no. He’s not drunk. He literally has cerebral palsy,” Corroza told the guardsmen before he returned to his bar, according to a review of the recording. “I know the crackheads around here. He’s not one of them.”

A couple of minutes later, that man walked up to the guard members. They listened, silently, hands in their pockets as he asked to see their ID’s and demanded to know who they were with.

But as the man got more animated, one guardsman, with the name Epperson on his hat, told him to step back. That appeared to set the man off.

“What? Last time I checked, you walked up on me! I was here before you were. You walked up on me,” the man said, although the video does not appear to reflect that.

Over the next few minutes, they argue about who was there first, and the man raises his voice.

“You’re not doing “s--t!” he said.

After that, two of the guard members turned away, but Epperson kept engaging with the man, repeatedly telling him to “step back.”

“I run s--t around here,” the man said.

“Go away,” Epperson responded.

“I run s--t around here,” the man said again.

Epperson then waved goodbye in the man’s face.

“No, you go goodbye,” the man said.

At that point, three more guardsmen walk up with snacks, and Epperson starts pointing in the man’s face.

“For the last f--king time, get the f--k out of here. You’re getting too f--king close. I told you too many f--king times,” Epperson said. “Get the f--k out of here. We don’t want any motherf--king problems around here. Get to f--king walking.”

“I’m sorry,” the man said and started flailing his arms wildly. “No, this is my block. Get out.”

That’s when the guardsmen start calmly putting on gloves. And in five seconds, it escalates.

“Let me see some ID’s,” the man tells the guardsmen. “I’m gonna call the police.”

At that point, a guardsman with the last name Toney on his hat shoved the man with two hands, sending him to the ground.

The man got back up and during the next two minutes, the guardsmen kept engaging with him as he flailed and yelled. Then, they grabbed him from behind and threw him face down into a pile of garbage and handcuffed him.

Corroza said he didn’t know what happened until WWL showed him the video Monday afternoon.

“I don’t think that they were malicious in intent, but after watching the video, it was not great,” he said shortly after viewing the video.

While Corroza said he supports the National Guard and its presence in the city, he described the action as “an overreach.”

The guardsmen detained the man and about 10 minutes later, another guardsman who appeared to be a supervisor named Roberts arrived. Epperson is heard in the video explaining what happened.

“He kept on stepping forward and I kept telling him to step back, wouldn’t leave,” Epperson said in the video. “I kept telling him to f--king leave. Wouldn’t f--king leave.”

As they appeared to wait for police to arrive, Roberts appeared to suggest the guardsmen could have handled things differently.

“If you can’t de-escalate, go that way or go that way,” he said, apparently motioning to different ways the guardsmen could have walked.

While audio of the interaction between the guardsmen and the man indicated that the guardsmen were waiting for the NOPD to pick up the detained man, the department on Monday said they had no record of anyone being arrested Sunday morning at that location. The man’s identity and whereabouts, if the guardsmen let him go or if a different law enforcement agency picked him up all remain unclear.

State Rep. Mandie Landry, D-New Orleans, has been a member of the House Judiciary Committee, which has oversight of the Louisiana National Guard, for six years. She described the incident as a “clear overreaction” after reviewing the video of it.

“As anyone who’s grown up here knows, we have a lot of characters in the French Quarter,” Landry said, adding that in most cases, people walk away from someone who makes them feel uncomfortable. “To see a man pushed down like that who obviously was a little bit different than other people was concerning, especially when there were five guardsmen there on the corner.”

She said given how politicized National Guard deployments have become, it would be helpful to know what sort of training the guardsmen get, especially in an urban setting like New Orleans where the NOPD is trained to deal with the general public in various ways.

“The National Guard is different. My dad was in the National Guard. You go one weekend a month, two weeks a year. It is a very different role,” Landry said. “It would be helpful to know that they do have the training that this sort of situation requires.

“I hope it’s just an incident of one person under a lot of stress. They may have been up all night, who knows?” Landry said. “And, you know, if the people involved are from maybe a small town or somewhere else, they might not be aware of the characters we have in the French Quarter. So hopefully it’s just a single situation, but it is a little concerning given the mood around here and Mardi Gras.”