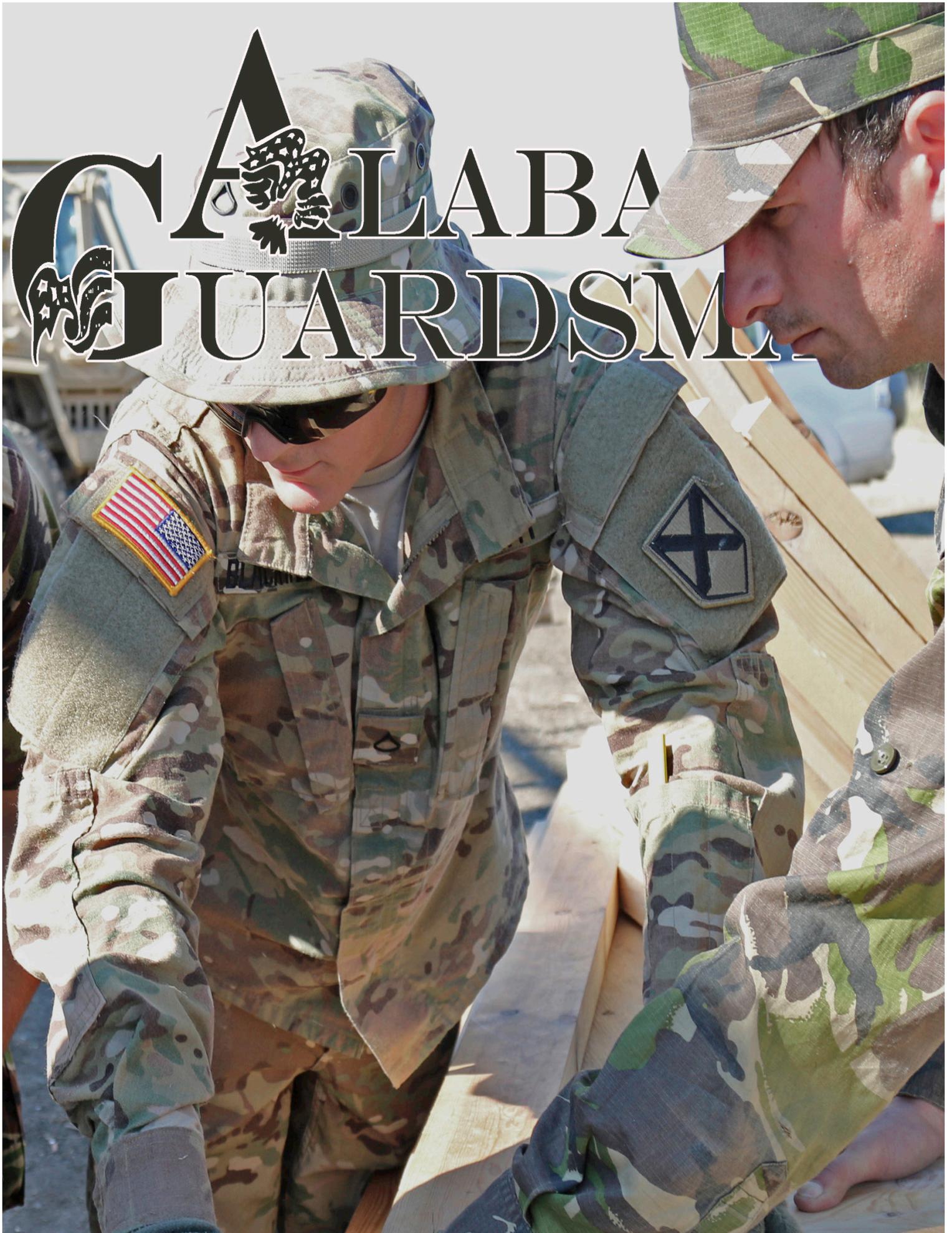


ALABAMA GUARDSMEN



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On The Cover

Pfc. Micheal Blackwelder, a carpenter with the 1151st Engineer Company assists Romanian Soldiers with cutting support beams for an ammunition storage building Aug. 25 at Cincu Training Center. American and Romanian forces are working together in support of Operation Resolute Castle 15 (U.S. Army Photo by Staff Sgt. Fredrick Varney, 131st Mobile Public Affairs Detachment).

Adjutant General

Don't let your situation dictate your attitude



**Maj. Gen.
Perry Smith**

It seems we are getting into full political season. I can't seem to turn on the television without seeing an ad for or against any number or individuals who would like to be commander-in-chief of the

United States armed forces. Now, don't worry, I'm not going to talk about politics.

First, I encourage you to research candidates and make an informed vote. However, history tells us that the candidate of choice for a good number of us will not be elected. In the last several presidential elections, the losing candidate has garnered more than 45 percent of the vote. That means that nearly half of voters were disap-

pointed in the outcome. I say that to say that those whose candidate didn't win still had to live in the same world as those whose candidate won. Now, those disappointed could have moped and complained for four years – and some did – but they also could have gone about their business, doing what they could to make themselves happy and fulfilled in their situation.

(Please see **ATTITUDE**, page 7)

State Command Sergeant Major

STEP: Select, Train, Educate and Promote



**Command
Sgt. Maj.
Eddie Pike**

The United States Army has revised its requirements for enlisted promotions within the ranks of sergeant and staff sergeant. Soldiers will

be required to compete among their peers, on a more competitive scale that focuses on education, physical fitness, marksmanship and foreign language skills. The Army has introduced a three phase strategy to expand its "STEP" program, which stands for "select, train,

education and promote". These significant changes will be applied across the Army, including the reserve component and the Army National Guard, and will be start January 1, 2016.

STEP was designed on the concept that enlisted service members have achieved full competency and proficiency in their current grade and military occupational specialty and have demonstrated potential to serve at the next higher grade. All noncommissioned officers will be required to follow the STEP process in order to be promoted to the next higher grade. Later in 2016, education requirements will become mandatory for staff sergeants to be promot-

able to sergeant first class. In 2017, specific educational requirements will be extended to master sergeant promotions, and will be a requirement for all grades within the enlisted corps.

The sergeant major of the Army has adopted the STEP process as a methodology to ensure that noncommissioned officers entrusted to lead troops every day are all measured by the same standards, and are able, fit and capable of leading Soldiers. The STEP process focuses on the three leadership development domains – institutional, operational and self-development. Soldiers who have

(Please see **STEP**, page 8)

Alabama soldiers participate in Operation Resolute Castle

by Tom Gordon
Weld For Birmingham

Editor's note: This story originally ran on the Weld For Birmingham website (<http://weldbham.com/>) August 11, 2015. It is reprinted with permission.

The two weeks of required annual training for Alabama National Guard soldiers have often taken place at the rolling countryside in the old Fort McClellan reservation in Anniston or in the steamy woodlands of Camp Shelby, Miss.

But this summer several hundred of the soldiers, most of them from a big engineering unit, have been spending their time working alongside their host country counterparts building and renovating trails, roads and buildings at a training facility known as Cincu in central Romania. According to officers who have watched them on the job, what the Alabamians are doing in this part of Eastern Europe is not make-work stuff. They say the Alabama soldiers and the Romanians working with them are gaining valuable experience, experience they both can build upon, and that the presence of Alabamians is a sign of U.S. support to its allies in Eastern Europe, a sign that should not go unnoticed by Vladimir Putin's Russia.

Even the names of the exercises seem to have Putin in mind. The Alabama soldiers are part of an exercise called "Operation Resolute Castle," and "Resolute Castle" is part of a larger exercise called "Operation Atlantic Resolve."

"We're having to do this in response . . . to Russia's invasion and illegal occupation of Crimea and what they're doing in eastern Ukraine and the other things that they are doing that are disturbing the security in Europe," said Lt. Gen. Ben Hodges, the U.S. Army's commanding general in Europe.

The Alabama Guard's presence in Romania is not new. The state Guard has had



William Frye/photo

Members of the 528th Light Reconnaissance Battalion of the Romanian Land Force and the 1st Squadron, 131st Cavalry, Alabama Army National Guard, conduct a joint area reconnaissance mission during Exercise Red Dragon on June 13, 2015, in Babadag, Romania. Red Dragon is a training exercise conducted between the 131st Cavalry, Alabama Army National Guard and the 528th Light Reconnaissance Battalion, Romanian Land Force, in an effort to build stronger ties between American and Romanian forces.

a partnership with Romania since 1993. But never have its numbers been so large there. Since June, contingents of nearly 100 Guard soldiers, a majority of them from the 877th Engineer Battalion, along with others from the 31st Signal Company, the 115th Signal Battalion and the 1166th Military Police Company, have been doing two-week rotations at Cincu as part of "Operation Resolute Castle."

Some other members of these units also have been supporting a "Resolute Castle" operation in neighboring Bulgaria. The rotations are funded under what is called the "European Reassurance Initiative." According to The Army Times, Guard soldiers from other states have been working in two-week rotations on projects and training exercises with their counterparts in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland.

Also in June, as Alabama Guard soldiers

were beginning their rotations in "Resolute Castle," soldiers with the Alabama Guard's 1st Squadron, 131st Cavalry Regiment, were doing two weeks of training with Romanian troops as part of another operation, named "Red Dragon."

The fourth "Resolute Castle" rotation of Alabama Guard soldiers is in Romania now. A fifth and final rotation will take place in September.

Many of the Alabama soldiers, such as 877th's commander, Lt. Col. Shawn Arnold, are veterans of deployments to Iraq or Afghanistan. The Romanian military was part of the coalition of U.S.-led forces in both countries. Romania was under a Soviet-style dictatorship for about 45 years after World War II, but it now is a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Hodges termed it "a critical part of the

Snap Shots

A look at some of the recent highlights from the Alabama National Guard



Contributed/photo

Lt. Col. Wilson DaSilva and Lt. Col. Andrew Davis took part in a change of command ceremony on the Multinational Force and Observers' Memorial Square today, 14 July 2015. The new 1 SB hails from the National Guard and the state of Alabama, the outgoing Soldiers head back home to Nevada.



Sandra Lucas/photo

Sgt. 1st Class Vernon Hunter, Readiness NCOIC, 31st Chemical Biological Radiological, Nuclear Brigade, Alabama National Guard calls roll during the first formation of a command post exercise, August 6, 2015, in Tuscaloosa. Soldiers of the 31st CBRN and augmentees will set up an operations center to simulate their response to a catastrophic disaster. This exercise will test procedures and Soldier response.



William Frye/photo

Maj. Gen. Perry G. Smith, the adjutant general of the Alabama National Guard, speaks to a group of representatives from military, state and federal agencies at the Alabama National Guard Title 10 Defense Support to Civil Authorities Integration Meeting at the Alabama National Guard Joint Force Headquarters in Montgomery, July 15, 2015. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss how the various military, state and federal agencies can work together and support the state of Alabama during a complex disaster.



William Frye/photo

Company A, 136 Expeditionary Signal Battalion takes part in a deployment ceremony in Arab, Alabama, July 18, 2015. The company will deploy approximately 115 Alabama National Guard Soldiers to Afghanistan, Kuwait, Jordan, Iraq, and Qatar, in support of operations Spartan Shield, Freedom's Sentinel, and Inherent Resolve. A/136th will provide tactical and strategic communication support in the United States Central Command area of responsibility.



Christopher Davis/photo

Master Sgt. James Garrison receiving the Meritorious Service Medal for his work on developing a Battalion Unit Ministry Team training plan. The award was presented by the Alabama NG State Chaplain, Col. Henry Beaulieu at the Alabama National Guard Joint Forces Headquarters Montgomery, AL, August 2, 2015.



Sandra Lucas/photo

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. – Brig. Gen. Maria R. Gervais, commandant of the U.S. Army's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear School, Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, visited the 31st CBRN Brigade during a command post exercise here Aug. 9, 2015. Gervais is familiar with the actions of the 31st CBRN and the command and control CBRN response element (C2RE) mission. Recognized for their outstanding achievements are (L to R) Staff Sgt. Perry Wain, transportation movement section(S4); Spc. Cruz Johnson, human resources specialist (S1); Brig. Gen. Maria R. Gervais; Capt. Johnathan Morgan, p.m. shift battle captain (S3); Sgt. Maj. Michael Blackwood, operations sergeant major (S3).

Congratulations to the following retiring Alabama Guardsmen:

E8	Chaney, Timothy W.	20 SF BN
E7	Cochran, Ricky L.	HHC 1-167 Infantry BN
E7	Dunn, Phillip T.	Joint Forces Headquarters
E6	Partain, Billy D.	168 Engineer Co.
E7	Passler, Patrick M.	AL ARNG Recruiting and Retention
E8	Pietras, Robert E. II	AL ARNG Recruiting and Retention
E6	Porter, Billy J.	217th MP Co. (Rear)
E8	Prior, Stephen A.	Co. B 1 BN 167 Infantry
E8	Thompson, Wendell R.	2025 Transportation Co.

Editors note: The names of retired Alabama Guardsmen are provided by MACOMs

(ATTITUDE continued from page 3)

There are things in this world that we can change, and it is great to work to change those things if needed. There are also things that we can't change, and we need to learn to work within parameters that we might rather not work within.

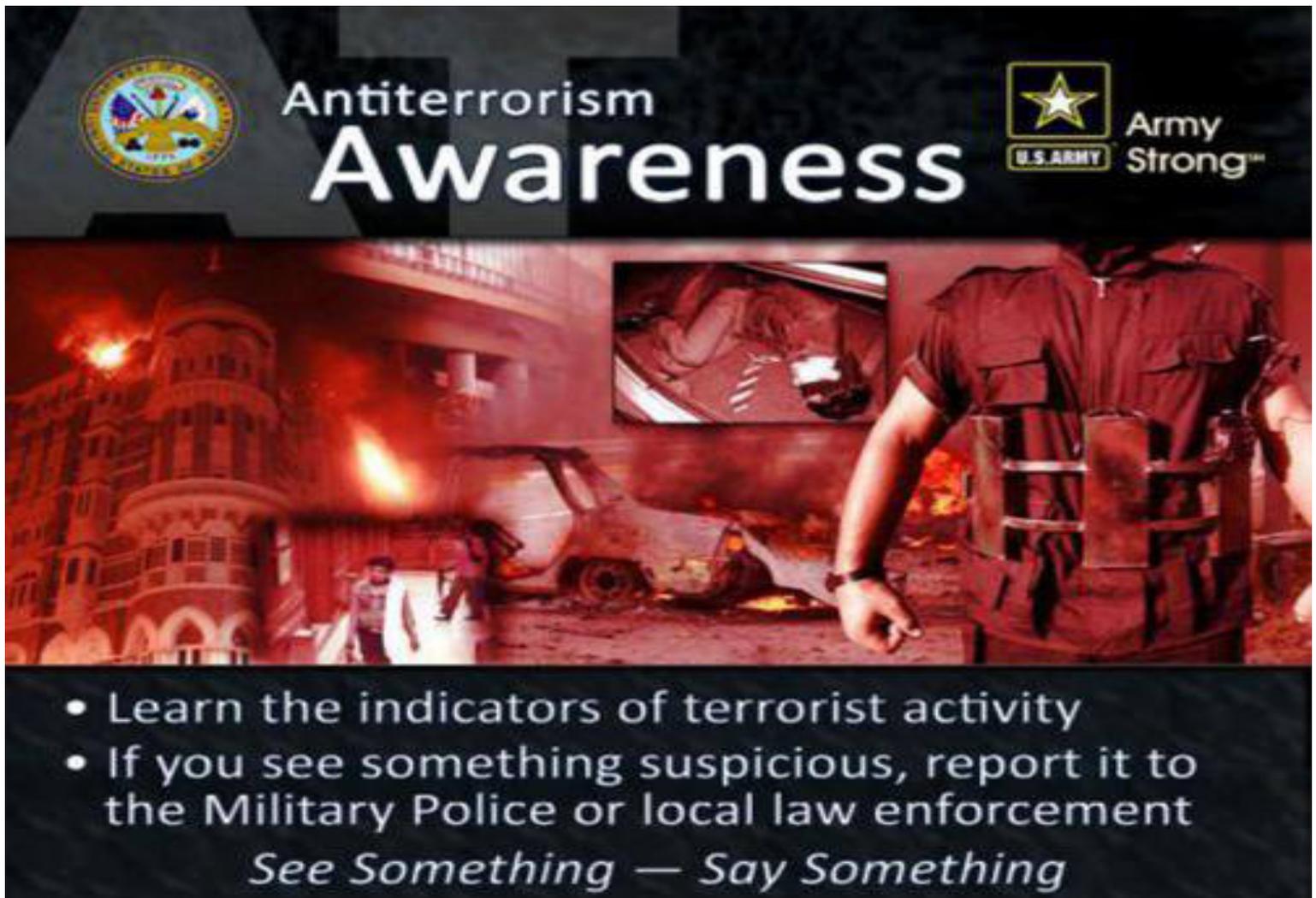
Any Soldier or Airmen who has been in the service any length of time will have a story about a first-line leader who cared more about self-glorification than accomplishing the mission. We have all had the unfortunate experience of knowing a commander who was more consumed with the trappings and privilege of command than the responsibility to lead, care for and mentor

his or her troops. There is no excuse for these kinds of leaders, but if you find yourself in one of these situations, you can still set the example by living the Army and Air Force values and putting the mission first.

Let us not stop working to effect meaningful change. On the other hand, let us not allow our situation to dictate our attitude and outlook on life. Whatever you do, don't mope around and say "my situation makes it impossible for me to excel," and resign yourself to stagnation. Sometimes the way to bring about change is to vote, protest, write, lodge complaints, fight, etc. And, sometimes the best way to bring about change is to

carry on in our own way, forging ahead with integrity to put the mission first and keep people always in the forefront. Work to be a leader who will replace that first-line leader and commander I mentioned earlier. Take care of the Soldiers and Airmen for whom you are responsible. Take a "no" and find a way to work within those unwanted, and perhaps unwarranted, parameters. Look for a new, unexpected opportunity. Remember that a fine sword is made by putting steel in the fire until it is red hot and hammering it, not by putting that steel in a comfortable setting and massaging it. Lead from the front!

Antiterrorism Awareness Month



Antiterrorism
Awareness

U.S. ARMY Army Strong™

- Learn the indicators of terrorist activity
- If you see something suspicious, report it to the Military Police or local law enforcement

See Something — Say Something

(STEP continued from page 3)

obtained civilian education on the collegiate or graduate levels will earn additional promotion points. The Army will retain the 800-point format for promotion worksheets but will eliminate points currently available in the “military education” section for completion of Warrior Leader Course and Advanced Leader Course, since these courses will be required for promotion consideration to sergeant

and staff sergeant. The Army will also eliminate promotion points for combat experience. There are promotion point incentives for Soldiers who make the commandant’s list or are named distinguished honor graduate during any required Army course.

As the State Command Sergeant Major, I encourage all first line leaders, first sergeants and commanders to prepare for this change,

which will affect all enlisted personnel. I also encourage all Soldiers and noncommissioned officers to study the guidance regarding STEP and position themselves to earn their future promotions, based on their own skills set, technical and physical performance, ability to maintain Army standards and their willingness to be a student of military service.

Alabama Air National Guard

Alabama's 187th Fighter Wing Doubles Size of Primary Airspace

by Tech. Sgt. Matthew Garrett
187th Fighter Wing

MONTGOMERY REGIONAL AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Ala. -- The training airspace utilized by the 187th Fighter Wing, technically referred as Military Operating Area (MOA), will nearly double in size on as of July 23, 2015. The new Red Tail MOA will connect two existing fighter aircraft training areas-- the Camden Ridge/Pine Hill operating area in the middle of the state between Selma and Coffeeville and the Birmingham 1 and 2 operating areas in the north that exists just south of Tuscaloosa. The combined operating areas, over 100 miles from southwest to northeast corners, will provide a much larger volume of airspace and long range air-to-air, high altitude, supersonic intercepts that are vital for fifth generation fighter aircraft like the F-35 Lightning.

Approval for the increased airspace required collaboration with every major airline company, Atlanta Center and Federal Aviation Administration. "There will be little or no effect on commercial air travel," said Lt. Col. Christopher Germann, 100th Fighter Squadron Standards and Evaluations Chief, who is also a fighter pilot for the 187th Fighter Wing.

"Before the Red Tail MOA, we would have to fly further for long range air-to-air, supersonic training. With the MOA being 40 miles away, we are saving tax-



Matthew Garrett/photo

Alabama Air National Guard Tech. Sgt. Jody Hershbine prepares to ride across the United States to raise money for the Wounded Warrior Project, July 1, 2015. Hershbine will ride more than 3,500 miles from Savannah, Georgia to Astoria, Oregon.

payer money by using less fuel" said Germann. The Red Tail MOA will allow fighter pilots to train at supersonic speeds from 32,000ft to 50,000ft above the ground across the entire 100 mile range of the airspace without any environmental impact to the population below. Historically, the pilots would fly more than 200 miles for similar training opportunities over the Gulf of Mexico.

While the 187th Fighter Wing will be one of the primary users, the MOA will also be available for other military units, serving four states. The airspace will support training for Eglin AFB, Valparaiso, Fla., Tyndall AFB, Panama City Beach, Fla., Maxwell AFB, Montgomery, Ala., Naval Air Station Meridian, Meridian, Miss, Birmingham Air National Guard Base (ANGB),

Birmingham, Ala. and the New Orleans ANGB, New Orleans, La. The airspace can accommodate a diverse range of military aircraft, such as the U.S. Navy's T-45 Goshawk and the U.S. Air Force's T-1 Jayhawk, KC-135 Stratotanker, F-15 Eagle, F-22 Raptor and F-35 Lightning II.

The Red Tail MOA gets its name in honor of its heritage. The historic 100th Fighter Squadron at the 187th Fighter Wing was activated in 2007 to honor the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen. During World War II, the 100th Fighter Squadron was one of the four original Tuskegee Airmen squadrons that would paint their aircraft with distinctive markings of bright red tails to make them easily identifiable to allies.

10 Alabama Guardsman

(PARTNERSHIP continued from page 3)

alliance.

Romania's partnership with Alabama is part of a U.S. effort dating from 1991 to mentor and train with nations formerly a part of the Soviet bloc. Twenty-two states have such partnerships. The Guard in Alabama's northern neighbor, Tennessee, has a partnership with Bulgaria, and Tennessee Guard soldiers, with some participation by Alabama troops, are working to upgrade and expand a training facility there.

"Romania has been with us in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Balkans," Hodges said in a telephone interview from U.S. Army Europe headquarters in Wiesbaden, Germany. "They are working very hard to continue modernizing. They are a very reliable ally and somebody that's working as hard as they can to improve and modernize their own capability, and I would attribute much of that to the longstanding relationship that the Alabama National Guard has had with the Romanian military."

Lt. Col. Shannon Hancock, an Alabama Guard spokesman who lived in Romania for three years as a liaison officer between Alabama and Romania, said that more than a few Alabama soldiers, including the Guard commander, Maj. Gen. Perry Smith, have longstanding relationships with members of the Romanian military. She also said that under the partnership program, Romanian troops have attended the U.S. Army War College and the Air War College at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery.

"They trust us," Hancock said. "It's a trusting relationship."

In the past, only three to five Alabama Guard soldiers, including top noncommissioned and high ranking officers, would go to Romania at a time, usually for a week. The need for larger numbers and more frequent exercises involving the movement of troops and equipment became necessary given Russia's involvement in a separatist war in Ukraine, its annexation of the Crimean peninsula and its growing hostility toward NATO and the West.



William Frye/photo

Staff Sgt. Casey Grissett and Sgt. Nick Green of the 1st Squadron, 131st Cavalry, Alabama Army National Guard discuss tactics with Romanian Land Forces Sgt. 1st Class Razuan Osoianu during Exercise Red Dragon on June 13, 2015, in Babadag, Romania.

"Now this is kind of showing our allied brethren our support . . . when they need help in their backyard," Hancock said. Hodges, a West Point graduate who has been in the Army for 35 years, said the U.S. is calling on the Guard and Reserve forces to rotate in and out of countries like Romania and Bulgaria because the number of active-duty U.S. Army soldiers in Europe has dropped dramatically.

"When I was a brand-new lieutenant, we had almost 300,000 soldiers stationed in Europe during the Cold War and the mission for those 300,000 soldiers was to assure our allies and to deter the Soviet Union," Hodges said. "Today, we have 30,000 soldiers stationed in Europe and we still have the same mission to assure our allies and (deter) Russia." Part of Hodges' challenge is to make the "30,000 look and feel like 300,000" with regular Army, Guard and Reserve units coming into the NATO countries to conduct exercises and other activities "so that the American flag, U.S.

Army units and capabilities are seen everywhere."

"Alabama takes this seriously, and when I visit the chief of defense for Romania he spends half the time telling me how much he likes Alabama," Hodges said.

Lt. Col. Arnold, the 877th commander, was part of the first "Operation Resolute Castle" rotation in June. The Tuscaloosa County resident said he believes the rotations of Alabama Guard soldiers have given Romanians some "peace of mind" about the U.S. commitment to their security, but he also said in working together, the Alabamians and Romanians have forged friendships, adding to those already built up during the partnership's 22 years.

"You cannot surge trust, and you cannot surge relationships," Hodges said. "You can't, you know, pull them out of a hat in case of an emergency. Those things are built over time, and that's what Alabama has done in Romania."

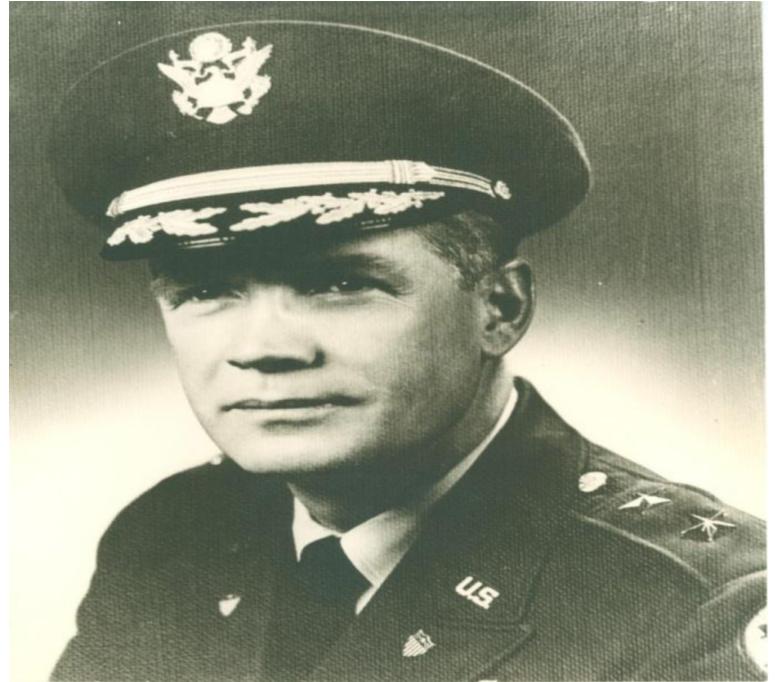
History

Maj. Gen. Henry Vance Graham had several prominent roles in Alabama Guard

by **Bernard Brown**
State Historian

Maj. Gen. Henry Vance Graham is the only Adjutant General that has served in the Alabama National Guard to be dual commissioned as a Chief Warrant Officer and a General Officer. The dual commission allowed Graham to perform flight operation and training as a pilot in McDonnell F-101 voodoo. Graham made a name for himself because of his involvement in several significant historical events during the civil rights movement, where he was federalized twice under the authority of two United States Presidents. He is well-known for his role in asking Alabama Governor George Wallace to step aside from standing in the doorway at the University of Alabama to allow black students to register for classes in 1963. Graham held several military positions prior to his appointment as Adjutant General. Graham started his career as an enlisted soldier, quickly moving up the ranks from Private to First Sergeant. Maj. Gen. Graham was commissioned as an officer in 1940, again advancing

through the ranks as a commissioned officer to attend the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in 1942. Graham was federalized with the Alabama National Guard at the start of World War II, serving in Southern France, Italy, Germany, and Africa. The unit he served with was the 167th Infantry Regiment Brigade, 31st Infantry Division, and Headquarters Seventh Army. In 1959, Maj. Gen. Graham was appointed to the position of Adjutant General by Gov. John M Patterson, remaining in this position until 1963. After his appointment as Adjutant General, Graham was selected to hold the position



Contributed/image

Maj. Gen. Henry Vance Graham, held Dual Commissions serving as adjutant general.

of Assistant Division Commander with the 31st Infantry Division and 30th Armored Division. Graham would remain a qualified Army aviator until his retirement after 35 years of military service



MONTGOMERY, Ala. – From L to R: Capt. Eduard Madalin GHIU, Col. Steven Grigsby, Col. Valentin BECHERU, Maj. Gen. Allen Harrell, 167th TSC commanding general, and Col. Gheorghe IORDACHE meet at the adjutant general's office here. All three Romanian officers were here for a Cyber State Partnership Program visit and Harrell performed the official General Officer welcome and office call with them. The visit took place from 19-25 July 2015.