

# Alabama Guardsman

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*Alabama Soldiers learn lessons today from battle 150 years ago Pg.2*

*Snap Shots: Highlights in the Alabama National Guard Pg.4*

*The Adjutant General and State Command Sgt. Maj. Pg.3*

*Alabama Guard promotes first female Military Police First Sergeant Pg. 6*

# Alabama Soldiers learn lessons today from battle 150 years ago

By Jamie Brown  
131st MPAD

GETTYSBURG, PA -- On July 2, 1863, Soldiers from Alabama and Maine fiercely fought each other here for control of a hill called Little Round Top during a key moment of the Battle of Gettysburg. One hundred fifty years later National Guardsman from Alabama and Maine met at this same spot at a ceremony, July 17, to commemorate the past and to celebrate the unity that the two states now share.

The ceremony was the culmination of an eventful day that had groups from both states touring the historic battlefield during staff rides before coming together for the ceremony. The Alabama contingent included more than 40 Soldiers. The group included Soldiers from three Alabama National Guard units who carry the lineage of units who fought at Gettysburg: the 31st Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) Brigade out of Tuscaloosa, the 161st Medical Battalion out of Mobile and the 1st



Jamie Brown/photo

*GETTYSBURG, Pa. - Alabama National Guard Soldiers from the 31st Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) Brigade out of Tuscaloosa pose with their unit colors on Little Round Top here on July 17. The 31st traces its unit lineage back to the Fifth Alabama Infantry that fought at the Battle of Gettysburg. The Soldiers were here as part of an event held in conjunction between the Alabama and Maine National Guards. Guardsmen from both states toured the battle site and took part in a ceremony on Little Round Top. Soldiers from Alabama and Maine fought on the site 150 years ago in a pivotal part of the battle*

of the 167th Infantry Battalion headquartered in Talladega.

Col. Charles Keith, garrison commander for the Army Training Center at Fort McClellan and the facilitator of the staff ride for Alabama said the experience would be valuable to those who attended.

"I believe in conducting this joint officer and noncommissioned officer professional development event with the Maine National Guard, celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Battle at Gettysburg will have a

significant impact in continuing to remember and learn from those who came before us," he said. "Staff rides are an engaging and fantastic opportunity for present-day military leaders to internalize the lessons of past military actions for possible application to modern day concepts and missions."

Lt. Col. Shannon Hancock, who assisted in organizing the event agreed by asking a question.

"How many times do younger Soldiers get an opportunity to come and (Please see **GETTYSBURG**, page 5)

## Alabama Guardsman

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## On the Cover

*GETTYSBURG, Pa. - The chief of the National Guard Bureau, Gen. Frank J. Grass (left) and the adjutant general of Alabama, Maj. Gen. Perry Smith, shake hands here July 17 after placing a wreath on the monument honoring Alabama Soldiers who fought at the Battle of Gettysburg. They were here as part of an event held in conjunction between the Alabama and Maine National Guards. Guardsmen from both states toured the battle site and took part in a ceremony on Little Round Top. Soldiers from Alabama and Maine fought on the site 150 years ago in a pivotal part of the battle. (photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jamie Brown).*

## Adjutant General

**Study of history is essential for Soldiers**

**Maj. Gen.  
Perry Smith**

I had the pleasure of visiting the battlefield at Gettysburg this month as part of a staff ride of Alabama National Guard Soldiers who are in units which trace

their lineage back to the Civil War. While there, we met with Soldiers of the Maine National Guard whose units also have lineage back to the Civil War. We also met with the Chief of the Na-

tional Guard Bureau, Gen. Frank Grass.

During this training event, I loved seeing the look of concentration on the faces of young officers and noncommissioned officers as they laid out the battle in their minds, perhaps making different decisions in their own imaginations than did Gen. Lee or Gen. Meade or some of the other battlefield commanders. I was greatly encouraged by the discussion between the Soldiers on this trip of the strategy involved in the battle, the use of the terrain, the use of different types of troops and varied tactics, and the leadership styles of those on the field during those hot

and violent days 150 years ago.

I also saw the awe on the faces of these young Soldiers as they realized that their feet were standing on the same grass that soaked up the blood of more than 50,000 warriors who were wounded or killed as a result of those three days in 1863.

Some of the private conversations during our lunch period – which we shared with the Maine Soldiers – focused on the added difficulty of the Civil War which pitted neighbor against neighbor, friend against friend, and even sometimes brother against brother. The Civil War represented a na-  
(Please see *HISTORY*, page 5)

## State Command Sergeant Major

**Trip to Gettysburg helps bring perspective**

**Command Sgt.  
Maj.  
Eddie Pike**

I recently had the privilege and honor to travel to Pennsylvania with more than 40 other members of the Alabama National Guard. The reason for our trip was to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Battle

of Gettysburg. During that battle, Soldiers from Alabama fought intensely against Soldiers from Maine for control of a hill called Little Round Top. It was a pivotal point in the battle.

Our contingent from Alabama met up

with a group of Guardsmen from Maine and held a ceremony at Little Round Top. It was heartwarming to see our Soldiers stand in unity on a spot where they had previously fought so fiercely. It was also great that we had members of our group who represented units that could trace their lineage all the way back to that battlefield at Gettysburg. The 31st Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) Brigade out of Tuscaloosa, the 161st Medical Battalion out of Mobile and the 1st of the 167th Infantry Battalion headquartered in Talladega can all trace their history back to Gettysburg and they are all continuing that proud history.

We also were able to participate on a staff ride where our group toured the battlefield and discussed the battle at great

length. I talked to several of our Guardsmen who were amazed at the hardships the Soldiers from Alabama faced at that battle 150 years ago. They marched for miles and miles on bare feet without much water just to get to the battlefield. It was amazing. But let me tell you that I am just as amazed at the great things our Alabama Guardsmen have done over the last 11 years. You have risen to every challenge put before you and have done so with great spirit and great character. I'm sure that years from now, future Alabama Guardsmen will look back at what you've done with respect and admiration. I, for one, am proud of all you have done, all you continue to do and all the great things I know you will do in the future. It is an honor to serve with you.

# Snap Shots

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



Jamie Brown/photo

*GETTYSBURG, Pa. - Alabama National Guard Soldiers pose in front a monument in honor of Alabama Soldiers who fought at the Battle of Gettysburg. The Guardsmen were here July 17, 2013, as part of an event held in conjunction with the Maine National Guard.*



Jamie Brown/photo

*BIRMINGHAM, Ala. - Lt. Gen. Darren McDew, the 18th Air Force commander, visits the 117th Air Refueling Wing here July 10. McDew met with Brig. Gen. Steven Berryhill, Alabama Air National Guard commander, Col. Cliff James, 117 ARW commander and other commanders on base. McDew was lead on a base tour where he greeted and talked to airmen about their mission and individual duties in each section.*



James Burroughs/photo

*Master Sgt. Dennis King, 135th Expeditionary Sustainment Command's Chaplain Assistant, received his Doctor of Education from Walden University while deployed in Kuwait. This degree is the culmination of 5 years of work that overlapped another deployment to Afghanistan in 2009-2010. Dr. King successfully defended his dissertation via telephone from his office on Camp Arifjan. King is a 33 year veteran of the Alabama National Guard and a retired school principal from Pickens County. At home, he works as Anniston Army Depot's School Liaison Officer. King said, "I never would have completed this degree without the G.I. Bill and the help of a military friendly school like Walden." King uses his teaching skills in the Army as a trainer of the Army's suicide prevention program. He has currently trained over 180 Soldiers from 15 different units during this deployment*

*(GETTYSBURG continued from page 2)*

do something like this?"

One of those young Soldiers was grateful for the opportunity to participate in the trip.

"This offer came up and I jumped at it," said Spc. Ernest Philon, a medic with the ambulance platoon for the 127th Area Support Medical Company, part of the 161st Medical Battalion. "I was really grateful for the opportunity to come to this event. I've gotten so much from this. ... learning how involved our units from Alabama were, just made a big difference in me personally and watching all of the things that they had to go through makes me really grateful of where I am now, being in the unit that I'm in and the advantages we have now compared to our counterparts back then. The sense of pride swelled up in me, especially when we were at the (Alabama) memorial. Just looking at that and listening to how far they had to march and all of the hardships they went through to even get up on this hill, it really hit home for me."

Staff Sgt. Kenneth Corder, a squad leader with D Co., 1/167th Infantry also found the experience enlightening.

"It was very interesting," he said. "It turned out to be a bigger day than I thought it was going to be. It's crazy to think that you're part of something that was here standing on the ground that you're standing on, that did something so important."

At the end of the day the chief of the Na-

tional Guard Bureau, Gen. Frank J. Grass, joined Alabama's adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Perry Smith, Maine's adjutant general, Brig. Gen. James D. Campbell, and Maine governor, Paul LePage, for the ceremony on Little Round Top.

Keith started the ceremony by reading a statement from Gov. Robert Bentley, who was unable to attend the event.

"I can think of no more fitting tribute to the brave men who struggled upon this very hill, nor to those who rest in this hallowed ground, than to see the Soldiers of Alabama and Maine meet once again, this time in the spirit of unity," he said.

Both Smith and Campbell stressed the importance of citizen Soldiers that make up the National Guard.

"Citizen Soldiers, throughout the history of this country, have kept this nation united and free," Campbell said.

Smith also commented on the continued importance of the units from Alabama and Maine.

"I think it's pretty impressive that the same unit that was the 20th Maine is represented here today with their flag and the Alabama National Guard has flags here of the three units that trace their lineage back to the battle of Gettysburg," he said. "Both Maine and Alabama have participated in a whole lot of battles that benefit the freedom of this country. We all should be very proud of that. We're going to continue to do that in the

future."

Grass echoed those sentiments.

"This is a special event, to come here and to look back 150 years at what occurred and to have Soldiers and Airmen of the Guard standing in the ranks, looking back at these flags and these colors and how you have carried that tradition to this battlefield today," he said.

When the events of the day were over, Keith reflected on the trip's value and expressed a desire for this not to be the last time that Guardsmen from Alabama and Maine meet to share their unique history.

"Having this valuable opportunity to visit the most famous battlefield in the world with members of unit organizations who have so much military history that can link directly to units who actually fought against each other during this battle will help all of us remember the sights and sounds and actual historical aspects of terrain analysis, leadership, and concepts of maneuver that influenced the turning point of the Civil War," he said. "The Alabama and Maine National Guard have a long standing relationship, strengthened by not only the events at Gettysburg but also with units who have deployed together and replaced each other in Iraq and Afghanistan. These historic units have celebrated key anniversaries at Gettysburg as part of a long and continuing tradition of solidarity for our state and nation and it is up to each one of us to see that this tradition continues."

*(HISTORY continued from page 3)*

-tion divided. Yet, 150 years later, young Soldiers from Maine and Alabama walked the same grounds as their ancestors, this time in peace with a united goal.

It has been said that we cannot know where we are going if we do not know where we have been. This is why the study of history, particularly military history for Soldiers, is so important. The benefits of this staff ride will be seen years in the

future as those who participated become senior leaders in the Alabama National Guard. Those Soldiers will be able to use the analysis and discussion of this training to influence decisions in tactics, leadership and the profession of arms.

I congratulate the attendees for being selected to go on the staff ride by their commands and for doing all of the necessary preparation – including the extensive

required reading – to make this event successful. I also thank all those who planned this event and led it – you ensured that it was very beneficial training. I encourage all who did not attend to read about the Battle of Gettysburg and the Civil War and to apply lessons from that war to the profession of arms today as part of your individual professional development. Lead from the front!

## Alabama Guard promotes first female M.P. First Sergeant

by Brenda Thomas  
State Public Affairs Office

Regina Duckett, originally from Boaz, Alabama, was promoted to first sergeant of the 214th Military Police Company July 14, 2013. She is the first female first sergeant in the history of the Alabama National Guard's Military Police.

She joined the Alabama Guard in 1995 at the age of 18 and has gradually worked her way up the noncommissioned officer (NCO) ranks.

Duckett spent her first 10 years of service in the 217th Military Police Company in Prattville. She spent several years as a Military Police school instructor and most recently was the operations NCO for the 128th Military Police Company in Huntsville.

"This has always been a goal of mine," said Duckett. "I've strived for this for my entire career and hope to make sergeant major one day."

Duckett holds a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from Faulkner University in Montgomery and a master's degree in Justice and Public Safety from Auburn University Montgomery.

In her civilian career, Duckett has been a police



Brenda Thomas/photo

*Regina Duckett is pinned the Alabama National Guard Military Police's first female first sergeant by her father, retired Marine Corps Sgt Maj. Billy Duckett.*

officer with the Montgomery Police Department for 12 years. She is currently a lieutenant assigned as the public information officer.

"Whether the first sergeant is a female or a male is really insignificant," said Brig. Gen. David Brown, 31st Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Brigade (214th's higher command) commander. "It's about being the ultimate leader and that is what 1st Sgt. Duckett represents. She has been successful in

every position she's ever held, been an example of selfless service and great leadership, doing all the right things to be successful. Yes, she is the first female, but she wears Army green. That's what I see."

"It's an honor. I'm proud to be the first female, but more importantly I'm proud to be a first sergeant," Duckett said. "My mission here is to get these Soldiers combat ready and to keep them there."