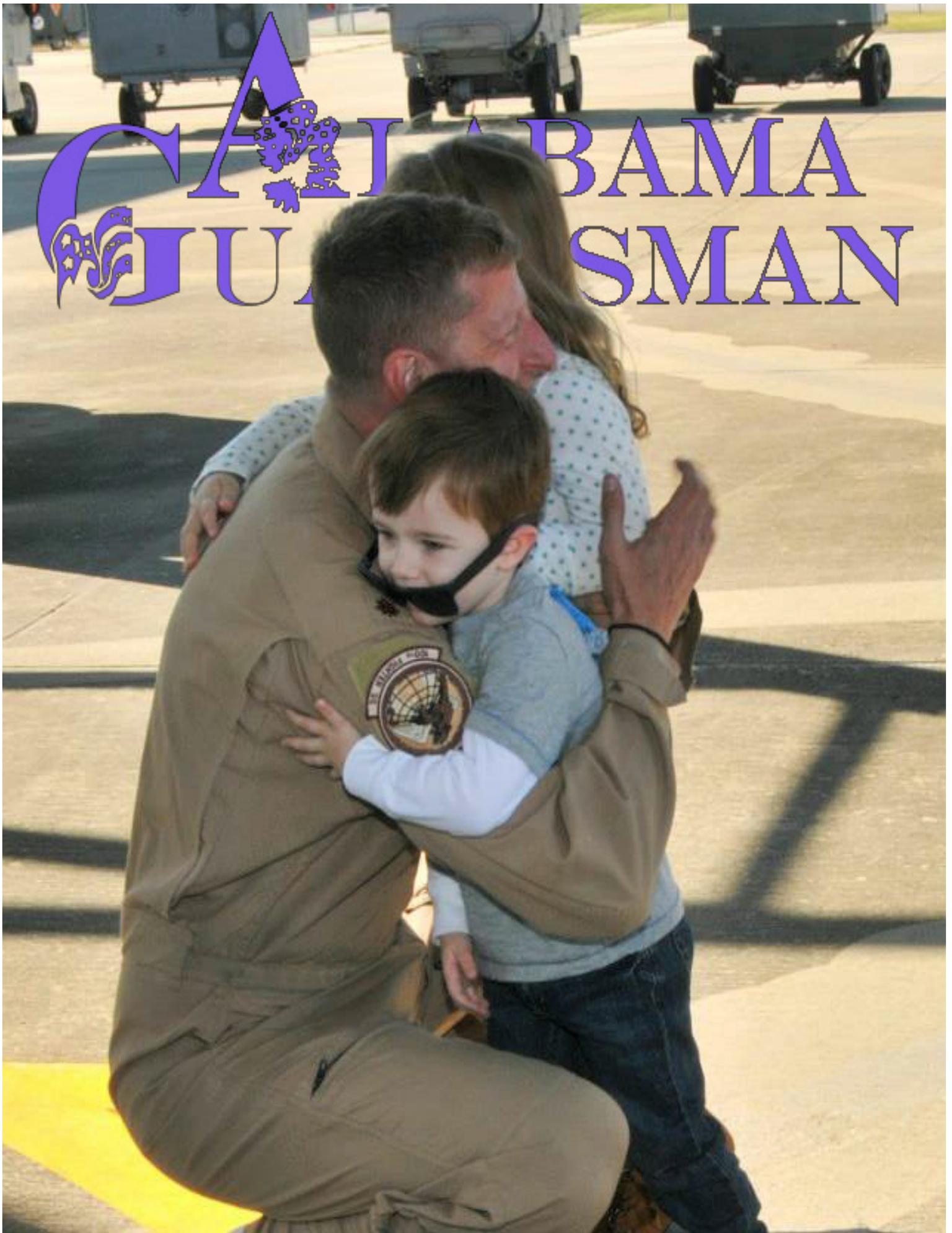


ALABAMA JULIUS SMAN



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On The Cover

MONTGOMERY, Ala.—A member of the 187th Fighter Wing, Alabama Air National Guard receives a warm welcome home Nov. 3, 2014. The unit returned from an Air Expeditionary Force rotation in Afghanistan. The wing deployed nearly a dozen F-16 Fighting Falcons and more than 300 personnel consisting of pilots, maintenance specialists and support personnel in April. (Contributed Photo).

Adjutant General

Year's end is a time for reflections and resolutions



**Maj. Gen.
Perry Smith**

As the year ends, the Alabama National Guard has fewer deployed Soldiers and Airmen than any time in the last 13 years. That means that

more Alabama Guardsmen are spending the holidays at home than in the last 13 years. For that fact, I am truly thankful.

We can look back at this year and the past several years and be proud of our accomplishments – the accomplishments of the Alabama National Guard. If

I tried to list those accomplishments, I would run out of room long before I could make a comprehensive catalog. You – the Soldiers, Airmen, civilians, contractors, and families of the Alabama National Guard – are what makes this organization a premier National Guard in the country. I thank you for your service, dedication and sacrifices.

As I have mentioned many times in this forum, hard fiscal times are upon us and will likely get worse. However, I have faith that no matter the constraints, you will continue to impress me with your ability to accomplish the mission in the face of adversity, just as you have done for years.

It is now the time of year that

many make resolutions. If you are one inclined to make resolutions, I hope you will consider renewing your resolve of excellence as a Soldier or Airman. Let us continue to make the Alabama National Guard great, and in so doing, strengthen our communities, our state, and our nation.

Please remember those we still have overseas this season; those still unable to sit around the table or sing carols with their loved ones. Send a prayer for them. Send a care package for them. Send a card of well-wishes to their families.

I wish each of you great peace and joyous times during this holiday season and a very happy and prosperous new year.

State Command Sergeant Major

The NCO sword: a symbol of responsibility



**Command
Sgt. Maj.
Eddie Pike**

The United States Army NCO sword dates back to the year 1840 and was modeled after the German infantry sword used during the Napoleonic

where the United States were engaged in combat missions or warfare.

During the Mexican-American conflict, Spanish-American War, and the Civil War, the NCO sword was worn by Army sergeants and most of the enlisted Soldiers. On August 6th, 1875, the original design and use of the NCO sword was discontinued and a modern version was introduced and manufactured. The modern version, made of steel, was worn by U.S. Army sergeants and first sergeants and later became a sig-

nificant role in military ceremonies that marked the transfer of power and responsibility within the enlisted commands of the Army and Air Force.

Today, the NCO sword is used as a token of military tradition and indicates the assumption of duty and increased responsibility. It is also used during significant ceremonies where retiring enlisted members of the Army and Air Force are given formal acknowledgement of their committed and dedicated service.

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

Alabama Guard strengthens bonds with Romanian partners



William Frye/photo

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. -Alabama National Guard's assistant adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Charles L. Gable, discusses important topics with Romanian Army Maj. Gen. Nicolae Ciuca during a visit to the 20th Special Forces Group, Nov. 9, 2014.

by Spc. William Frye
Staff Writer

The Alabama National Guard has been busy strengthening a 22 year relationship with the Romanian military. This relationship grew out of an American commitment to help Eastern European countries enter NATO.

The State Partnership Program is a Department of Defense program managed by the National Guard Bureau. Under the program, multiple states partner their National Guards with foreign militaries to support greater strength and security among our developing allies. In all, there are 69 partners, with 74 countries. The Alabama National Guard was one of the first states to enter the program. It has been partnered with

Romania since 1993. The Alabama National Guard shares its experience and expertise with the Romanians.

Army Maj. Gen. Perry G. Smith, the Alabama National Guard adjutant general, has said his Soldiers and Airmen have used skills acquired during combat deployments, as well as those learned by responding to Hurricane Katrina and other disasters at home, to teach the Romanians.

A team of Romanian military leaders spent seven days in November touring installations in Washington D.C. and Alabama. They met with National Guard leadership and discussed many topics such as command structure, equipment, capabilities and finances.

Alabama National guard leadership

says exchanges like this increase capacity and knowledge within the Romanian armed forces, but they also build relationships. Over time, two junior officers who meet at these sessions will become senior officers who are old friends. This leads to a more robust partnership.

This type of exchange is beneficial to the Alabama National Guard and America's national interest. Soldiers and Airmen gain experience working with international allies. These relationships also support national security goals by building partnership capabilities with our allies. Adm. James G. Stavridis former U.S. European Command commander, has said "The State Partnership Program is, dollar for dollar, my best Europe Command (EUCOM) investment."

Snap Shots

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



Willaim Frye/photo

MONTGOMERY, Ala. - Civic and military leaders from around the River Region join together at the Armed Forces Reserve Center here, Nov. 13, 2014, to proclaim November 9-15 Military Appreciation Week.



Bethany McMeans/photo

FORT McCLELLAN, Ala. - -Spc. Blaine Slaughter (left), an ammo bearer with the 1/167th Infantry Regiment and Sgt. Kyle Robbins, a gun team leader with the 167th, sight a mortar during small deflections training here, Nov. 1, 2014.



John Craft/photo

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. – First Sgt. Jeremy Birchfield, salutes the memorial to the 167th Infantry at a Veteran’s Day wreath-laying event held here, Nov. 11, 2014.



William Frye/photo

FORT McCLELLAN, Ala.- Christmas wreaths were laid on headstones at Fort McClellan Military Cemetery during a Wreaths Across America Ceremony, Dec. 13, 2014.



Gabriel Pavel/photo

BUCHAREST, Romania - Romanian Military Police soldiers practice detainee apprehension and detention methods in a simulated combat environment during a six day familiarization/mentoring initiative between members of the 231st Military Police Battalion (Alabama National Guard), and the 265th Military Police Battalion (Romanian Army) this past August. The 265th selected one Military Police platoon (approximately 30 MPs) to conduct detainee and area security operations events for the 4 Alabama National Guard Military Police mentors (Lt. Col. James Lake, battalion commander; Capt. Lee Barnes, battalion operations officer; First Sgt. Kenneth Pierce, company first sergeant, and Sgt. 1st Class Steven Davis, battalion operations NCO) to observe and provide feedback. 231st mentors also provided classroom instructions and hands -on practical exercises to enhance the pre-established training schedule.



John Hicks/photo

BIRMINGHAM Ala.- Soldiers stand in formation as approximately 70 Soldiers of the Alabama National Guard's Company B of the 1st Battalion, 169th Aviation Regiment, return to their homestation of Birmingham, Dec. 18, 2014, after a deployment to Afghanistan. The unit deployed in February 2014 and worked to transport U.S. and Coalition forces in support of combat operations across the northern and eastern regions of Afghanistan.

Congratulations to the following
retiring Alabama Guardsmen:

E9	Locke, Willie	HHT, 1-131 CAV
E5	Bennett, Terry	Training Center Eglin
E5	Turner, Percy	711th Brigade Support Battalion
E6	Turner, Morgan	711th Brigade Support Battalion
E5	Phillips, Jeffery	711th Brigade Support Battalion
E7	Webb, Bradley	711th Brigade Support Battalion
E7	Walton, James	231st MP Battalion
E7	Morris, Dean	877 th Engineer Battalion
E7	Wilson, Willard	214th MP Co
E6	Walker, Sami	186th Engineer Co.
E7	Parker, Rodgie	135th Sustainment Command
O4	Thomas, Brian	Joint Forces Headquarters
E7	Walton, James	HHD 231 MP Bn
O5	Wright, Michael	Joint Forces Headquarters
E8	Yarnell, Frank	Joint Forces Headquarters
O5	Morgan, Ronald	Joint Forces Headquarters
E5	Hicks, Kevin	Co. A (-) 1 Bn 167 Inf (IBCT)
E6	Hines, Regina	HQ 2101 Trans Co. (Det 1&2)
E7	Leach, James	1166 MP Co (Det 1)
E6	Mackey, Roy	167th Forward Support Company
E7	Page, John	31st Brigade Support Company
E5	Phillips, Jeffery	Co B 711th BSB
E5	Potts, Keva	900th Maintenance Co (Det 1) (CRC)
E5	Shakespeare, Tiffany	900th Maintenance Co. (Det 1) (CRC)
E6	Willis, Charles	Co B 1204 Avn Support Bn (AVIM)
E5	Wyatt, Tracy	Training Center Fort McClellan
O5	Thomas, Steven	129th Medical Co

(*SWORD* continued from page 3)

This month, the Alabama National Guard commemorates the following enlisted individuals who have made significant contributions to the enlisted corps. We have adopted the “Royal Order of the Sword” as an additional expression of our gratitude for their faithful service:

Command Sgt. Maj. Mitchell Cooper
Command Sgt. Maj. Perry Hooper

Command Sgt. Maj. Clark Kinder
Command Sgt. Maj. Willie Locke
Command Sgt. Maj. George Love
Command Sgt. Maj. Willie Lowery
Command Sgt. Maj. Allen Russell

As the State Command Sergeant Major, I am honored to present these retiring members of the Alabama National

Guard engraved and personalized NCO swords at their retirement ceremony Saturday, Nov. 22, 2014. They have displayed dedication to serve, accomplished their missions and have displayed leadership, loyalty and responsibility. These service members have represented the enlisted corps well, and have created legacies for future enlisted leaders.



CSM Eddie Pike
State Command Sergeant Major



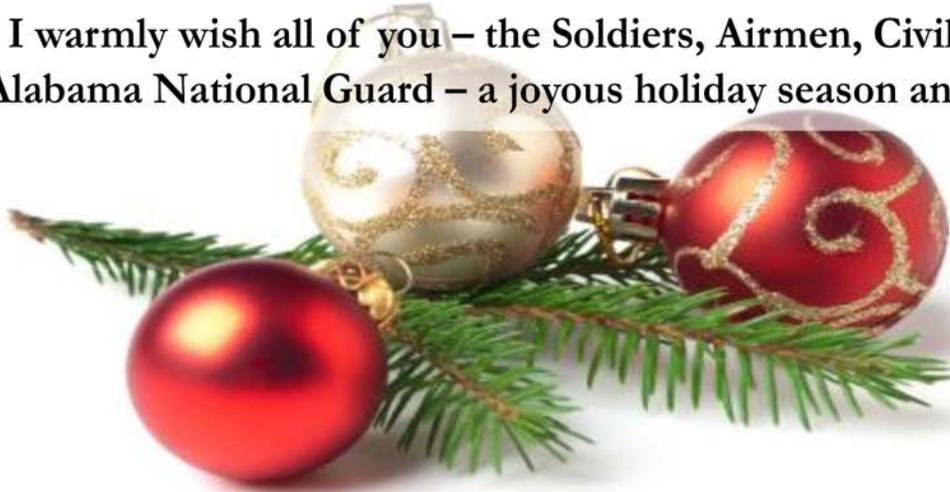
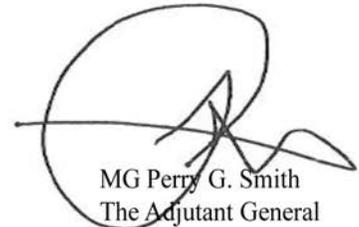
Wishing all members and families of the Alabama National Guard a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

As we all enjoy the holiday season, may we realize the blessings of freedom, prosperity and peace that is preserved by the men and women in uniform, including the Alabama National Guardsmen that are deployed away from their Families this season.

My hope is that this holiday season encourages us all to show kindness and generosity to those around us, and those who are less fortunate. I hope the season is safely enjoyed by all, and let the joy of the season spread into the New Year.

I warmly wish all of you – the Soldiers, Airmen, Civilians and Families of the Alabama National Guard – a joyous holiday season and a prosperous New Year!

MG Perry G. Smith
The Adjutant General



Snap Shots

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. – Command Sgt. Maj. John Black welcomes home Spc. Charlie Hill of the 877th Engineer Battalion at the Army Aviation Support Facility here Dec. 10, 2014. The 877th returned after an eight month deployment in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (photo by William Frye).