

Alabama Guardsman

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Alabama National Guard observes Women’s History Month

By Martin Dyson
131st MPAD

Women have been serving in the military since the birth of our nation. From the traditional roles of nurses and cooks in the Revolutionary War to the newly opened combat roles that they serve in during today’s conflicts. Despite this, females in the military have long struggled to find equal footing with their male counterparts.

Speaking at the Alabama National Guard’s Women’s History Month observance, Brig. Gen. Sheryl Gordon spoke of being referred to as “honey, darling and sweetheart.” But she always maintained a belief that, “One of these days you all will become a little more enlightened and you will begin to understand we are Soldiers, not just females but Soldiers.”

This enlightenment first began to dawn in 1981 when Congress requested that President Ronald Reagan declare the week of March



Martin Dyson/image

Representative Martha Roby is presented a certificate of appreciation for participation in the Special Emphasis Program Women’s History Month, April 3, 2013.

7, 1982 as “Women’s History Week.” In the years since then, legislation was passed allowing the president to declare March of each year as Women’s History Month.

Alabama has also come a long way in regards to women’s roles in serving in the National Guard. After not having any female commissioned officers until 1975 to now with Gordon as one of only two female major generals in the entire Army National Guard.

While females enjoy an equal-

ity that those who came before them could only dream of, their struggle is far from over. “We must continue to work to ensure that our human rights are preserved and observed around the world,” Gordon said. “And we must foster and continue the efforts for human rights here at home in the Alabama Guard.”

Gordon along with Representative Martha Roby and Col. Judy Dailey of the Alabama Air National Guard were the featured speakers at the event.

Alabama Guardsman

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On the Cover

ANNISTON, Ala. - Alabama Army National Guard Soldiers Capt. Jody Fuller, of Opelika, Ala.; 1st Lt. J.J. Pennington, of Montgomery, Ala.; Staff Sgt. Caleb Hampton, of Smith Station, Ala.; and Sgt. Stephen Wyatt, of Columbus, Ga.; negotiate an obstacle on Pelham Range, Ala., April 6. The Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 111th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group, 167th Theater Sustainment Command Soldiers faced a variety of obstacles requiring teamwork and innovation to accomplish. Each “problem” provided a set amount of tools which the Soldiers could use to cross water, move over a wall, or cross a gap while moving equipment and people toward the finish line. Exercises like this promote small-group problem-solving skills, which are critical to small teams on the battlefield (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Eric Pahon).

Adjutant General

Steps Guardsmen can take for career advancement



**Maj. Gen.
Perry Smith**

Everyone wants to be promoted. A question I heard often as a company commander was, “What do I have to do to be promoted?” While Soldiers and Airmen are called to exercise selfless service, it

is certainly right for Guardsmen to pursue advancement in their careers.

The Army and the Air Force have their own career management tools and their own career progression models, but that is not always sufficient for the National

Guard. Also, even though the services have career progression models, each Soldier and Airmen must still be responsible for his or her own career. This is especially so in the National Guard where one often has more ability to choose his or her positions and career paths.

I encourage each Soldier and Airmen to have a mentor and meet with that mentor on a regular basis. You should have an idea of the positions you want to fill through your next two promotions. You need to make sure that you are fulfilling all of your military and civilian educational requirements.

You need to have constant communication with your supervisors and consistently check your performance against their expectations. All supervisors also owe this

to their subordinates.

All of these things I have mentioned are items you could put on a checklist. However, as a Soldier or Airmen, you should know that there are several things you must do that cannot be put on a checklist. You must conduct yourself with honor and integrity – not something you can ever check off a list, because you should conduct yourself this way continually. You must treat those above and below you with respect. You must place the needs of your service and your country above your own. You must care for other people and take a genuine interest in those who work for and with you.

The things I have mentioned seem simple enough, but for the majority of us (Please see **ADVANCE**, page 10)

State Command Sergeant Major

A short look at the history and purpose of drill



**Command Sgt.
Maj.
Eddie Pike**

The purpose of drill is to enable a commander or noncommissioned officer to move his unit from one place to another in an orderly manner; to aid in disciplinary training by instilling habits of precision and response to

the leader’s orders; and to provide for the development of all warriors in the practice of commanding troops.

Military history reveals that armies throughout the world participated in some form of drill. The primary value of drill,

historically, is to prepare troops for battle. For the most part, the drill procedures practiced are identical to the tactical maneuvers employed on the battlefield. Drill enables commanders to quickly move their forces from one point to another, mass their forces into a battle formation that affords maximum firepower, and maneuver those forces as the situation develops.

In 1775, when this country was striving for independence and existence, the nation’s leaders were confronted with the problem of not only establishing a government, but also of organizing an army that was already engaged in war. From the “shot heard around the world,” April 19, 1775, until Valley Forge in 1778, Revolutionary forces were little more than a group of civilians fighting against well-trained,

highly disciplined British Redcoats. For three years, General George Washington’s troops had endured many hardships—lack of funds, rations, clothing, and equipment. In addition, they had suffered loss after loss to the superior British forces. These hardships and losses mostly stemmed from the lack of a military atmosphere in the country. Thus, an army was created with little or no organization, control, discipline, or teamwork.

Recognizing the crisis, Washington, through Benjamin Franklin, the American Ambassador to France, enlisted the aid of a Prussian officer, Baron Friedrich von Steuben. Upon his arrival at Valley Forge on February 23, 1778, von Steuben, a former staff officer with Frederick the Great, met (Please see **DRILL**, page 10)

Snap Shots



MOBILE, Ala. - Soldiers of the 226th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade from Mobile stand in formation at a deployment ceremony April 3, 2013. The unit departed for Fort Hood April 4, 2013 in preparation for its deployment to Afghanistan later this spring (photo by Jamie Brown).



Eric Pahon/photo

ANNISTON, Ala. - Maj. Richard Harris, of Huntsville, Ala., steadies the rope for Spc. David Lollis, of Opelika, Ala., while he descends an obstacle, Apr. 6. The Alabama Army National Guard Soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 111th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group, 167th Theater Support Command, faced a variety of obstacles requiring teamwork and innovation to accomplish.



Contributed/photo

Members of the Alabama Air National Guard's 187th Fighter Wing, gather in Conyers, Ga., after completing an extreme four-mile long obstacle course called the Spartan Race. The Alabama Guardsmen drew inspiration from their military heritage of the Tuskegee Airmen by naming the team "The Red Tails." Led by Col. Scott Patten, the 187th Fighter Wing vice commander, the Red Tails competed against 370 other teams and placed third overall.



April 2013 Sexual Assault Awareness Month

We own it... We'll solve it... Together



"As military professionals we must fully understand the destructive nature of these acts (of sexual assault), lead our focused efforts to prevent them, and promote positive command climates and environments that reinforce mutual respect, trust and confidence. Sexual assault among Service members is a problem we face together, one that can only be solved together."

*The Joint Chiefs of Staff
Strategic Direction to the Joint Force on
Sexual Assault Prevention and Response*

Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) in April is recognized across the country by both civilian and military communities. April offers a unique opportunity to build on existing momentum to fight this crime and ensure all Service members are treated with dignity and respect.

What can we do during April? Throughout every level of the Department of Defense (DoD), we should offer messages and activities that will reinforce...

- ***We own it...*** Emphasize we own this problem and our commitment to solving it.
 - *Commanders and senior enlisted leaders set and enforce standards of discipline within our organizations and are the key to creating a culture free from sexual assault.*
- ***We'll solve it...*** Leaders establish a culture where bystanders intervene, offenders are held appropriately accountable, victims are provided high-quality care and every soldier, sailor, airman and marine is treated with dignity and respect.
 - *Combating sexual assault requires strong prevention efforts, sustained progress, innovative approaches, and a multi-pronged, multi-disciplinary strategy.*
- ***Together.*** Reinforce the many ways we work within each Service, across DoD, and with our communities to combat sexual assault.
 - *We all have a role in combating sexual assault. It is essential that every Service member, at every level in our military, lives the core values of our profession of arms and treats each other with dignity and respect.*

Initiatives to Convey Ownership, Solutions and Solidarity: Consider using the entire month of April for SAAM activities to generate maximum awareness. Below are event ideas, starting with those of potential highest payoff:

- Distribute installation-wide message from Commanders reinforcing leadership's commitment to fighting this crime
- Facilitate meetings between victims, commanders, and leaders to deepen understanding of victim issues
- Organize visits and volunteer efforts at local rape crisis centers for leaders to more fully understand depth of problem
- Display large teal ribbon in high visibility areas with signage explaining the ribbon and SAAM
- Kick off the month with an event, such as unveiling of a large ribbon, to demonstrate public commitment
- Conduct run/walks to show solidarity around the theme and communicate support for victims
- Install signage at key locations on bases/installations, such as InfoKiosks and sign boards at entrance gates
- Implement social media campaign with daily tweets on Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) messages and reminders
- Hold a local ceremony to recognize those who help victims to include community responders
- Place articles throughout April in base media profiling SAPR efforts, outstanding care providers, and Commander's commitment

Resources to Help: Go to www.sapr.mil for the following:

- SAAM Messages from Senior Leaders
- Recent SAPR Initiatives
- Links to Key SAPR Programs
- Sample Media Materials
- Sample Speech for Commanders
- Graphics to Download



We own the problem of sexual assault. We all have a role in fighting it.

SAPR program details can be found at www.sapr.mil. Contact SAPRO@sapr.mil.

Alabama Air Guard participates in joint exercise with Romanian Air Force

by Maj. Clare Reed
187th Fighter Wing

More than 150 Air National Guardsmen from the 187th Fighter Wing, out of Montgomery, went to Romania in August to participate in Dacian Viper 2012, a three-week joint exercise with the Romanian Air Force.

The Guard contingent, which included nearly 20 fighter pilots and eight F-16s, exercised with approximately 200 Romanian soldiers, technical staff, and pilots flying six MiG-21 Lancers at 71st Air Base, located near the town of Câmpia Turzii, in the northwestern part of Romania.

The Alabama National Guard has had a relationship with Romania since 1994 as part of the State Partnership Program. This wide-ranging program pairs Guard units with sixty-five different nations to improve both military and civil understanding and cooperation. Romania subsequently became a member country of NATO in 2004. Because of the longstanding relationship between the Romanian Air Force and the Alabama National Guard, the 187th Fighter Wing was a natural choice for the exercise.

“Our wing has to be able to deploy our F-16 aircraft anywhere in the world and on short notice in defense of our nation’s interest,” explained Col. Samuel Black, commander of the 187th Fighter Wing. “To do that, everyone in our wing has to work together in a closely coordinated way with each other and with other organizations. For Dacian Viper, we demonstrated that we can safely transport our people, planes, and equipment to a theater of operations more than 5,500 miles away.”

Once in Romania, the unit participated in training flights to enhance interoperability with NATO allies. “While we learn lessons from every trip, this trip went very



Contributed/photo

More than 150 Air National Guardsmen from the 187th Fighter Wing, Alabama Air National Guard, Montgomery, deployed to Romania late last summer to participate in Dacian Viper 2012, a three-week joint exercise with the Romanian Air Force.

smoothly,” said Black. “We’ve deployed many times over the years for training and combat operations, so this was a chance to keep our skills and processes sharp.”

The flying portion of Dacian Viper enhanced the tactical skills of the U.S. and Romanian fighter pilots by providing an opportunity to perform common flight and training activities. The aerial missions also allowed for an exchange of experience on tactics, techniques, and procedures for basic fighter maneuvers, air combat maneuvers, intelligence, tactical command, and cross service logistics support.

“We always welcome opportunities for our pilots to experience new environments,” said Lt. Col. William Sparrow, commander of the 100th Fighter Squadron. “Participating in Dacian Viper provided our younger pilots with some great opportunities they would not ordinarily have

here at home. Operating in an unfamiliar airspace, including taking off and landing in any place other than home station, makes our pilots better and stronger. The deployment undoubtedly enhanced our warfighting capability.”

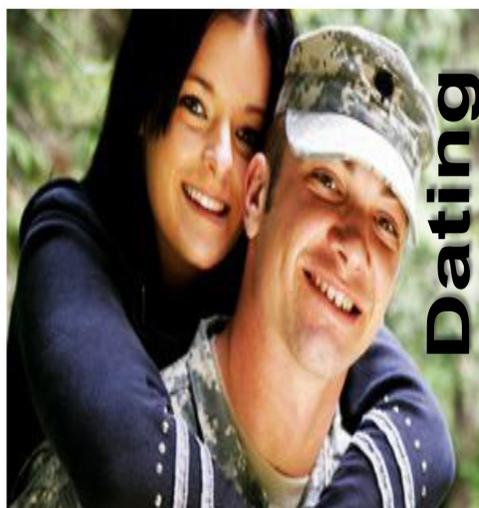
The final days of the exercise focused on combined air operations, in which US forces partnered with Romania pilots to exercise common air operations procedures. “Both units benefitted from the joint training,” added Sparrow. “Exercises like Dacian Viper improve the integration between our nations. We were impressed with the proficiency and capabilities of the Romanian pilots. They are a lot like us.”

During the exercise, 100th Fighter Squadron pilots were allowed to fly in the back seat of the MiG-21s and Romanian fighter pilots were allowed to fly in the
(Please see 187th, page 10)

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BBVA Compass pledges to hire, train and support veterans

Contributed
Employment Assistance Coordinator

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. – BBVA Compass signed the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) Statement of Support April 2, 2013 as a gesture of the bank’s commitment to hiring and training U.S. veterans and members of the National Guard and Reserve.

“Our veterans represent one of the greatest candidate pools,” said Jim Heslop, director of human resources at BBVA Compass. “By supporting their hiring and development, we help ensure veterans have a smooth transition from the front lines to civilian life.”

Heslop signed the Statement of Support at a ceremony led by Bill Kringel, Alabama state chairman of ESGR, at the bank’s offices in Birmingham. Ben Blass, U.S. Army Reserve captain and vice president of military recruiting at BBVA Compass, also attended the ceremony, where Heslop received a plaque commemorating the event and an American flag that once flew over the nation’s capitol.

“When we bring veterans on board, we gain employees who are competitive, disciplined and understand the ne-



Contributed/Image

Jim Heslop, director of human resources at BBVA Compass (right) and Bill Kringel, Alabama state chairman of ESGR celebrate Compass signing the ESGR statement of support on April 2, 2013.

cessity of working as a team to achieve success,” Blass said. “Giving back to this community that has given so much to us is the right thing to do and we take this commitment seriously.”

Heslop said the qualities and traits acquired in the military — leadership, discipline, collaboration and the ability to work through obstacles — are assets for BBVA Compass. The bank’s goal, he said, is to help military personnel put

those skills to use as they face the challenging transition from active duty.

The bank’s “Boots to Banking” mentorship program pairs each newly hired veteran with one already working at the bank who is familiar with the organization and the transition to civilian life and civilian work. By signing the ESGR Statement of Support, BBVA Compass expanded its commitment to veterans.



Service members and their families got to meet with several employers and get information on job vacancies and career opportunities at a job fair held at Joint Force Headquarters in Montgomery, Ala., April 10, 2013 (photo by Brenda Thomas).



**The 135th Sustainment Command
(Expeditionary) endows scholarship for
dependents of the Auburn Family**



The Auburn Men & Women of the 135th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) have started an Auburn University Endowment for scholarships to dependents of any Auburn Alumni killed in service to our country. In 2009, fourteen Auburn Alumni deployed with the 135th and served in OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM as members of the Joint Sustainment Command – Afghanistan. The 135th ESC scholarship is to honor those who paid the ultimate price and to preserve the Auburn legacy of military service.

Anyone may donate to the 135th Endowment and provide for the children of an Auburn Hero by contacting the AU – Office of Development (<https://fp.auburn.edu/giving/>) or contact Mrs. Paula Kierce at (334) 844-1187

(ADVANCE continued from page 3)

— those who are traditional Guardsmen — it can often be difficult to fulfill all of our military obligations on top of a full-time job, family responsibilities, civic and community duties, and religious obligations. However, these things are not complex or hard to understand. They are not new. They are the way to advance not only in the military but most aspects of life.

(DRILL continued from page 3)

an army of several thousand half-starved, wretched men in rags. He commented that a European army could not be kept together in such a state. To correct the conditions that prevailed, he set to work immediately and wrote drill movements and regulations at night and taught them the following day to a model company of 120 men selected from the line.

Discipline became a part of military life for these selected individuals as they learned to command without hesitation. This new discipline instilled in the individual a sense of alertness, urgency, and attention to detail. Confidence in himself and his weapon grew as each man perfected the fifteen 1-second movements required to load and fire his musket. As the Americans mastered the art of drill, they began to work as a team and to develop a sense of pride in themselves and in their unit.

Watching this model company drill, observers were amazed to see how quickly and orderly the troops could be massed and

(187th continued from page 6)

back seat of the MiG-21s and Romanian fighter pilots were allowed to fly in the back seat of the F-16s.

Lt. Col. Ryan Barker, the project officer for the deployment for the 100th, received one of those backseat rides. “The Romanian Air Force has taken the MiG-21 as far as that aircraft can go technologically,” Barker said. “They have done a great job doing everything in their power to remain relevant

So, you should pursue career advancement. You are your best advocate. Fight hard to get tough positions, learn everything you can about those positions, and do a good job in them. If you do these things, your promotions will take care of themselves. I have directed the staff at state headquarters to ensure that we give feedback from promotion boards and aid in shaping careers

maneuvered into different battle formations. Officers observed that organization, chain of command, and control were improved as each man had a specific place and task within the formation. Later, the members of the model company were distributed throughout the Army to teach drill. Through drill, they improved the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the Army.

To ensure continuity and uniformity, von Steuben, by then a major general and the Army Inspector General, wrote the first Army field manual in 1779, *The Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States*, commonly referred to as the Blue Book. The drill procedures initiated at Valley Forge were not changed for 85 years, until the American Civil War, and many of the drill terms and procedures are still in effect today.

Drill commands are about the same as at the time of the War of 1812, except then the officers and NCOs began them by saying, “Take care to face to the right,

and act as key players in any NATO air plan. Their pilots have attended the Tactical Leadership Program in a non-flying status. Their air force is also actively seeking other venues to enhance their tactical knowledge and expertise. Dacian Viper was just such a venue.”

“We had a very productive trip, both in terms of the training gained and the personal relationships formed or strengthened,” added

better than we have in the past. We owe that to you as warriors. With a renewed effort at headquarters to shape leaders and your continued outstanding performance, I know that the Alabama National Guard will be in good hands for years to come. Lead from the front!

right face.” Also, during the American Revolutionary period, troops marched at a cadence of 76 steps a minute instead of the current 120 steps. Then units performed precise movement on the battlefield, and the army that could perform them best was often able to get behind the enemy, or on his flank, and thus beat him. Speed spoiled the winning exactness. Also, firearms did not shoot far or accurately in 1776, so troop formations could take more time to approach the enemy.

As armament and weaponry improved, drill had to adapt to new tactical concepts. Although the procedures taught in drill today are not normally employed on the battlefield, the objectives accomplished by drill—professionalism, teamwork, confidence, pride, alertness, attention to detail, esprit de corps, and discipline—are just as important to the modern Army as they were to the Continental Army.

Black. “We have a great appreciation for the abilities of the Romanian Air Force. I believe they were able to see some of the strengths we bring to the table as an Air National Guard unit. They were particularly impressed with the maturity, professionalism, and technical expertise we have in the Guard because of the long tenure of our Airmen relative to active duty forces.”

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Fact Sheet

What is eBenefits?

eBenefits is a joint VA/DoD web portal that provides resources and self-service capabilities to Veterans, Service members, and their families to research, access and manage their VA and military benefits and personal information. eBenefits uses secure credentials to allow access to personal information and gives users the ability to perform numerous self-service functions. It also provides a list of links to other sites that provide information about military and Veteran benefits. It is an essential way for Veterans, Service members, and their families to receive access to and service from VA and DoD.

What can I do in eBenefits?

Some of the features within eBenefits allow Veterans and Service members to access official military personnel documents, view the status of their disability compensation claim, transfer entitlement of Post-9/11 GI Bill to eligible dependents (Service members only), and register for and update direct deposit information for certain benefits. For a full list of features, see the reverse side of this fact sheet. New features are being added regularly.

How do I access eBenefits?

eBenefits is located at www.ebenefits.va.gov. Before you are able to use the system you must register for an eBenefits account. You can choose from two levels of registration, Basic and Premium. To be able to register for an eBenefits account, you must be listed in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) and first obtain a DoD Self Service (DS) Logon. Note: If you attempt to register and are informed you have no DEERS record, VA will first need to verify your military service and add you to DEERS. This is most likely for Veterans who served prior to 1982. Individuals should contact a VA Regional Office for assistance in being added to DEERS.

What is a DS Logon?

A DS Logon is a secure identity (username and password) that is used by various DoD and VA websites, including eBenefits. If you are already registered in DEERS, you are eligible for a DS Logon. Once you have a DS Logon, it's valid for the rest of your life.

How do I register for an eBenefits account?

You can register for an eBenefits account online using the eBenefits DS Logon Account Registration Wizard. There are two types of registration, Basic and Premium. You will be walked through a series of questions to assist you in obtaining a Premium eBenefits Account, which gives you the highest level of access to eBenefits features. With a Premium Account you can view personal data about yourself in VA and DoD systems, apply for benefits online, check the status of your claims, update your address records, and more. To get a Premium eBenefits Account, you must verify your identity.

Many people will be able to verify their identity online by answering a few security questions. Service members may verify their identity online by using their Common Access Card. Military retirees may verify their identity online using their Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) Logon. For those unable to verify their identity online, you will instantly receive a Basic Account. A Basic eBenefits Account lets you customize the site and access information you enter into eBenefits yourself; however, you cannot see your personal information in VA or DoD systems. However, there are other options available to you. Veterans in receipt of VA benefits via direct deposit may have their identity verified by calling 1-800-827-1000 and selecting option 7. My HealtheVet users may use their secure My HealtheVet identity to obtain an eBenefits account. Others may need to visit a VA Regional Office or TriCare Service Center to have their identities verified in person.



eBenefits Features

If you are a Veteran:

- Use the eLearning Center for the online transition assistance program and more
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- View DoD TRICARE health insurance
- Sign up for Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI) (Time limits apply)
- Apply for Veterans benefits online (VONAPP)
- Search for an accredited representative or organization
- Use the Benefits Explorer tool
- Apply for or modify your dependency benefits
- Utilize a fast track claims processing system for Vietnam Veterans
- Conduct a health benefits eligibility check
- Order medical equipment such as hearing aid batteries and prosthetic socks
- Check on your appeal status
- Check on your compensation and pension claims status
- Check on your specially adapted housing grant application and claim status
- Generate a VA home loan certificate of eligibility
- Obtain official military personnel documents such as DD Form 214
- Register for and update direct deposit information for certain benefits

If you are a Service member:

- Use the eLearning Center for the online transition assistance program and more
- Transfer Post-9/11 education benefits
- View DoD TRICARE health insurance
- View DoD TRICARE reserve select
- Sign up for Service member out-of-pocket medical expenses (CCD)
- View Service members' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) elections
- Apply for Veterans benefits online (VONAPP)
- Use the Benefits Explorer tool
- Conduct a health benefits eligibility check
- Update Service member civilian employment information
- View Service member personnel information
- Check on your specially adapted housing grant application and claim status
- Generate a VA home loan certificate of eligibility

If you are a Family Member of a Veteran or Service member:

- Use the eLearning Center to get important health information
- Use the Benefits Explorer tool
- View Post-9/11 GI Bill enrollment status
- Check your VA payment history

For More Information visit www.ebenefits.va.gov