

Alabama Guardsman

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Technology brings Soldier to Spanish Fort Classroom

by Mike Brantley
Mobile Press Register
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SPANISH FORT, Alabama -- Capt. William Hurd of the Alabama National Guard didn't want to miss his appointment with a classroom of Junior Achievers at Spanish Fort High School despite his deployment to Afghanistan. Fortunately, he didn't have to. Earlier this month he had a big presence in Dianne Bernasconi's family and consumer science class despite being located on the other side of the globe.

Hurd -- a member of the 1st Battalion 167th Infantry, also known as the "4th Alabama" -- and the students were able to see and hear each other thanks to Internet video chat technology. They used the FaceTime application on Apple computers to communicate.

In the classroom, students



Mike Brantley/photo

Students in Dianne Bernasconi's family and consumer science class at Spanish Fort High School talk with Alabama National Guard Capt. William Hurd through a video chat Internet connection to Afghanistan, where Hurd is deployed, on Dec. 17, 2012, in Spanish Fort, Ala.

could see Hurd both on a notebook computer screen and on a larger video projection screen. At one point during the session, Hurd moved the camera at his end of the connection to show his surroundings, including a Christmas tree.

Hurd began volunteering in Bernasconi's class two years ago, teaching Junior Achievement curriculum focusing on career readiness. This morning, he chatted with students about "some of the tough decisions

that leaders have to make in crucial times."

Said Hurd, "If my experiences can help at least one of the great kids at Spanish Fort High School to open their eyes to opportunities they can create for themselves through the power of knowledge, motivation and dedication then I know I have succeeded."

Students in the class recently sent 70 holiday care packages to Hurd and the other members of his unit.

Alabama Guardsman

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On the Cover

A Soldier and his family enjoy their time at the 167th Theater Support Command's Annual Christmas party Dec. 8, 2012, in Fort McClellan, Ala. (Photo by Spc. Bianca Calderon, Unit Public Affairs Representative, 167th TSC).

Adjutant General

Happy holidays to the Alabama National Guard



**Maj. Gen.
Perry Smith**

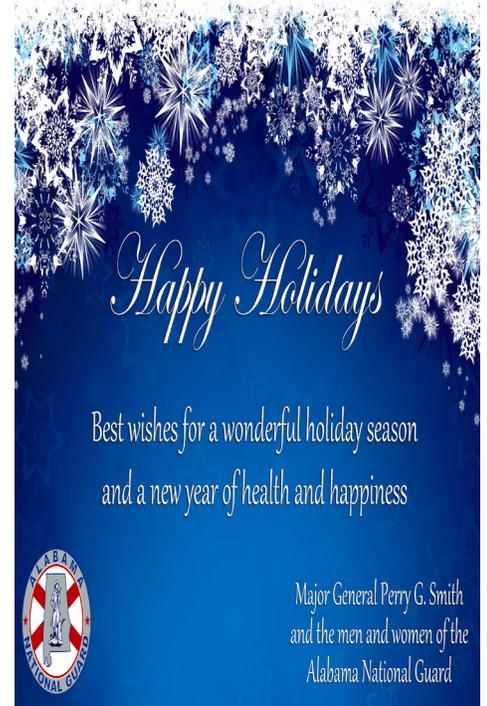
The holidays are upon us and I hope that you can enjoy this time with your families and loved ones. Please remember to think about and pray for

those who cannot be with their loved ones this season due to their service to our nation, including nearly 1,000 Alabama Guardsmen.

Whatever our individual

traditions this season, I hope we all seek opportunities this season and throughout the new year to be kind and giving to others. As we continue to celebrate the holidays, may we all be thankful for those who have gone before us to ensure we can do so freely, especially those citizen warriors who have protected their communities as part of the militia and National Guard for the past 376 years.

I wish you all the happiest of holidays and a prosperous and fulfilling new year!



State Command Sergeant Major

For Guardsmen the holiday season is a time of putting things in perspective



**Command Sgt.
Maj.
Eddie Pike**

One of our Alabama Guardsmen told me a story recently that hit home. He said that he was getting ready for December drill and had laid his uniform out. One of his children saw this

and became concerned. She asked him, "Daddy are you deploying and missing Christmas again this year?"

This story was a powerful reminder to me of not only the many sacrifices of our Guardsmen over

the last ten-plus years, but also their families. The number of Christmas holidays, birthdays, anniversaries, first days of school and other milestone events that have been missed by Guardsmen is hard to imagine. It is something that has affected a huge number of our Guard families.

As Christmas and the holiday season approaches, I want each of you to send your thoughts and prayers to all of our service members who are away from home serving this great nation of ours. Then I want you to enjoy and treasure this time with friends, family and loved ones. Cherish every moment. Many of you have deployed, and these holiday moments are one of the things you

probably missed and often thought about. A good many of you will possibly be deployed in the future. Take these special times and let them leave a lasting impression in your mind. You will likely use the memories during the tough times to help keep you going.

And as another year comes to a close, I would like to take this opportunity to express how thankful I am to serve alongside each and every one of you. It is an honor. I look forward to another year of the Alabama National Guard striving for excellence and doing great things. I wish each and every one of you a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

Snap Shots

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



Brenda Thomas/photo

Spc. Adrienne Johnson, 21, and Master Sgt. William Oates, 61, the youngest and oldest Alabama Guardsmen present, assist Alabama National Guard State Command Sgt. Maj. Eddie Pike with cutting the birthday cakes at Joint Force Headquarters in Montgomery during a celebration of the National Guard's 376th Birthday, Dec. 13.



Brenda Thomas/photo

Children enjoy some quality time with Santa during Joint Force Headquarters Family Day during December drill.



Bianca Calderon/photo

The 167th Theater Support Command's annual Christmas party surprised Soldiers' families and children with gifts and pictures with Santa Dec. 8, 2012.

Alabama Guard Infantry unit continues to set fast pace in Afghanistan



Contributed/photo

Soldiers with Task Force Centurion Prime's HHC and C Company pray together before heading out on a mission recently in Jalalabad, Afghanistan.

by Mike Tomberlin

Task Force Centurion Prime

KABUL, AFGHANISTAN (12/18/2012)-- Less than halfway through their deployment, the Soldiers of the Alabama National Guard's 1st Battalion, 167th Infantry Regiment have completed more than 5,000 missions and covered thousands of miles providing transportation and security to key leaders, military personnel and civilians throughout Afghanistan.

Task Force Centurion Prime, as the battalion is known for the deployment, works as part of the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan; an international coalition tasked with assisting the government of Afghanistan in developing accountable, Afghan-led security forces.

The Task Force Centurion Prime commander, Lt. Col. J.R. Bass, said the Soldiers of the 167th have become an integral part and make up the largest force under direct command of NTM-A.

"Our Soldiers never slowed down after arriving in August and the astounding number of completed missions reflects the dedication of everyone in the 'Fourth Alabama,'" Bass said. "To paint the full picture, we have safely transported 18,000 passengers across 65,000 of the most challenging miles imaginable during these first 5,000 missions. We have a committed team of infantrymen, equipment operators and maintenance personnel, communications technicians, as well as operations, intelligence, logistics, and administrative specialists who each play a key role in every mission."

Bass said the Alabama Soldiers are key to NTM-A's operations. "This battalion is responsible for the security of key military and civilian personnel who are training and mentoring the Afghanistan National Security Forces," he said. "This mission is essential in setting the conditions for accountable, Afghan-led security in

the future."

Their work is not going unnoticed, said Bass. "What must be noted is that almost every day a senior leader from any one of the 38 coalition nations we protect contacts me to praise the exceptional level of professionalism our Soldiers display," he said.

The Soldiers are divided into seven different companies with missions varying from base operations to "outside the wire" activities.

The tally of missions at mid-December stood at: A Company, from Valley, has completed approximately 800 missions; B Company, from Pelham, has completed approximately 1,500 missions; C Company, from Cullman, has completed approximately 100 missions; D Company, from Sylacauga, has completed approximately 200 missions, E Company, from Talladega, has completed approximately 400 missions; F Company, from Oxford, has completed (Please see INFANTRY, page 6)



Army Safety Gram

ARMY SAFE
IS ARMY STRONG

13-05

05 December 2012

Tips to Help You Safely Deck Your Halls

The Holiday Season means road trips, package wraps and ribbons, a fully trimmed tree, and more challenges. Consider these few tips for planning and safety this Holiday Season.

Safety Checklist before the Holidays

- ◆ Put any fuel that can catch on fire in a safe container outside the home.
- ◆ Test your home's multipurpose fire extinguisher.
- ◆ Test the batteries in your fire alarm.
- ◆ Clear any clutter out of escape routes from your home.
- ◆ If toddlers will be visiting, install safety gates at tops and bottoms of stairs.
- ◆ Check your throw rugs for non-slip backings.
- ◆ Put nightlights in hallways.
- ◆ Test the ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs), both indoors and outdoors.



Holiday Decorations and Tree Trimming

- ◆ Before you buy a live tree, bend some needles in half. If they break easily or don't spring back, the tree is too dry.
- ◆ At home, put your tree in a non-tip stand kept filled with water.
- ◆ Place it at least three feet (one meter) away from a heat source, and near an electrical outlet.
- ◆ Before you string on the lights, inspect the bulbs, sockets, and cords for damage. Never put candles on a tree.
- ◆ String no more than three strands of lights together.
- ◆ If you buy a decorative plant for the holidays, ask the florist if it's poisonous to kids or pets. Keep questionable plants out of children's reach.

Reach For The Star - But Don't Reach Far!

- ◆ Face a ladder while climbing, and wear non-slip soles.
- ◆ When reaching to crown your tree with an ornament, keep your body centered on the ladder.
- ◆ On a stepladder, stand no higher than the second rung from the top.
- ◆ When nailing Santa onto the roof, remember that the highest safe standing level of an extension ladder is third rung from the top.
- ◆ Place your outdoor ladder well away from power lines, on level ground.

Great Safety Gifts to Give and Get

- ◆ Smoke alarm
- ◆ Cooking thermometer
- ◆ Car emergency kit
- ◆ Reaching aids
 - ◆ Safety glasses / goggles
 - ◆ Escape ladder
 - ◆ Fire extinguisher
 - ◆ Carbon monoxide detector



Make sure you keep these safety tips in mind keep your Holidays a joyous occasion for everyone!.

(INFANTRY from page 5)

approximately 1,500 missions; and Headquarters and Headquarters Company, from Talladega, has completed approximately 600 missions.

The Task Force Centurion Prime command sergeant major, Command Sgt. Maj. John Black, said so far the colder weather and early snow-fall have yet to deter the Soldiers from their active operation tempo.

"I kept hearing that the pace would slow down as we got into the winter," Black said. "To me the pace still seems steady and consistent but the weather is still fair. All I can really say is that as long as missions are requested and we believe they can be safely accomplished we will continue to drive forward."

The 1st Battalion, 167th Infantry,

traces its roots to before the Civil War when it was part of the Fourth Alabama Infantry Regiment. It has played a role in nearly every major war and campaign since, including a legendary stint in France during World War I. This is the first time the entire battalion has deployed as a whole in the current war.

Sculpture helps bring awareness of PTSD

by Sgt. 1st Class Jamie Brown
131st MPAD

Recently visitors to the Joint Force Headquarters building have been greeted with an unusual sight. In the lobby of the building is a unique sculpture of a Soldier's head. Inside this giant head are flames and the visual representations of problems and stressors such as bills, court summons, a repossession notice and a child support notice. Under the head is the quote: "With PTSD, sometimes the troubles start after the shooting stops."

The sculpture which is titled "Under Fire" is the work of Alabama artist Walter Moore, and is meant to bring awareness to the problem of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), a problem that has affected many who have served in the military.

"We've been sending our men and women to war at a rapid pace for more than ten years now," said the Alabama National Guard's highest ranking officer, Maj. Gen. Perry G. Smith, who was instrumental in having the



Brenda Thomas/photo

Spc. Nicole Waggoner, Staff Sgt. Sebastian Benson, and Sgt. 1st Class Nancy Waller study the Under Fire sculpture at Joint Force Headquarters in Montgomery, Ala

sculpture brought to Joint Force Headquarters. "War is hard. War is physically, emotionally and spiritually stressful at every turn. We, as senior leaders, owe it to these warriors to assess the situation and act to help them when they get home and may suffer from PTSD. They didn't let us down and we need to ensure we don't let them down when they

return."

The sculpture has caught the attention of many who pass by it.

"People do stop and look at it," said David Redman an armed security guard at Joint Force Headquarters. "They're curious. They'll read the information that is with the sculpture."

The sculpture has motivated (Please see SCULPTURE, page 8)



Safety First ... Prevention Always!



GET IN GEAR



ALWAYS WEAR THE MANDATORY PPE:

- DOT APPROVED HELMET
- EYE PROTECTION
- LONG PANTS
- LONG SLEEVED SHIRT/JACKET
- FULL FINGERED GLOVES
- OVER THE ANKLE BOOTS/SHOES
- HIGH VISIBILITY GARMENTS – BRIGHT COLOR FOR DAY AND RETRO REFLECTIVE FOR NIGHT



Contact The Safety Office For Upcoming Classes.

The importance of the Magi to Christmas

by CH (COL) Henry Beaulieu
Senior Army Chaplain

“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.” (Matthew 2:1-2 King James Version)

As we approach the Christmas Season, we often see three kingly figures included in Nativity scenes. They have often been called wise men or “Magi.” Who were the Magi? What is their significance to the Christmas story?

The book of Daniel states that they were the esteemed advisors to the king of Babylon. These “wise men” studied math, science, agriculture, history, astronomy and astrology. During Daniel's tenure in the court of Babylon, Daniel was trained as a magi. During his service to the king of Babylon, it was not the magi who opposed Daniel. In fact, there is good evidence that the magi respected Daniel because of his ability to correctly interpret the king's dreams. Further, they were Chaldeans (modern day Iraq) (as was Abraham). How many came? Tradition says 3, but we don't know for sure; there may have been more! When did they come? Christ's family is living “in a house” and the star did not appear till Jesus' actual birth. It may have took the magi as long as 2 yrs to get

(SCULPTURE continued from page 8)

some Soldiers to take a closer look at PTSD.

“The display itself caught my eye with the flames and documents painted on the head itself,” said Sgt. 1st Class Nancy Waller, training NCO with the 22nd Recruiting and Retention Battalion. “After reading the sign on the side of the stand



A depiction of the Magi following a star to Bethlehem.

to Bethlehem. Further, the text (“child” in Matthew 2:11) shows us Jesus was no longer an infant, but a weaned toddler! This explains why Herod killed all babies 2 yrs and under in Bethlehem; he had to cover all contingencies!

Why did they come? In Daniel 9:25, Daniel told them the exact year of the coming of the Messiah! It is also of note that Gabriel, who gave this information to Daniel, is the same angel who spoke to Zecharias and Mary in Luke chapter 1.

This trip may have begun as curiosity or as a political issue, but Matthew 2:11 testifies to something more: They came to “worship him.” While testifying to the royalty of this baby, God is also fulfilling His promise made to another Chaldean

named Abraham in Genesis 12:3. How fitting that He chose to work in the lives of those whose forebears were kind to Daniel and from the same region as father Abraham! These Magi came to see Jesus as much more than a mere prince among the Jews (they give kingly gifts to Jesus, not Herod)! In the book of Matthew it is also emphasized that they “bowed down” in their worship of Christ as their king.

When Christ returns in all His might, as king of all creation, will he find you like the Magi who acknowledge his lordship or like Herod, full of “head knowledge” but with no saving grace in your heart?

I would like to wish all of you a blessed Holiday Season!

regarding Chronic Illness and all the aspects that are affected, my awareness of the seriousness of this illness was heightened. I will be accessing several of the topics on the website that was listed to further educate myself as well as incorporate these topics into our battalion's NCO DP schedule.”

The “Under Fire” sculpture is sponsored by Heads Up Alabama. This organization is designed to help people learn more about how good mental health and good physical health are connected. To learn more about Heads Up Alabama, visit its website at www.headsupalabama.org.