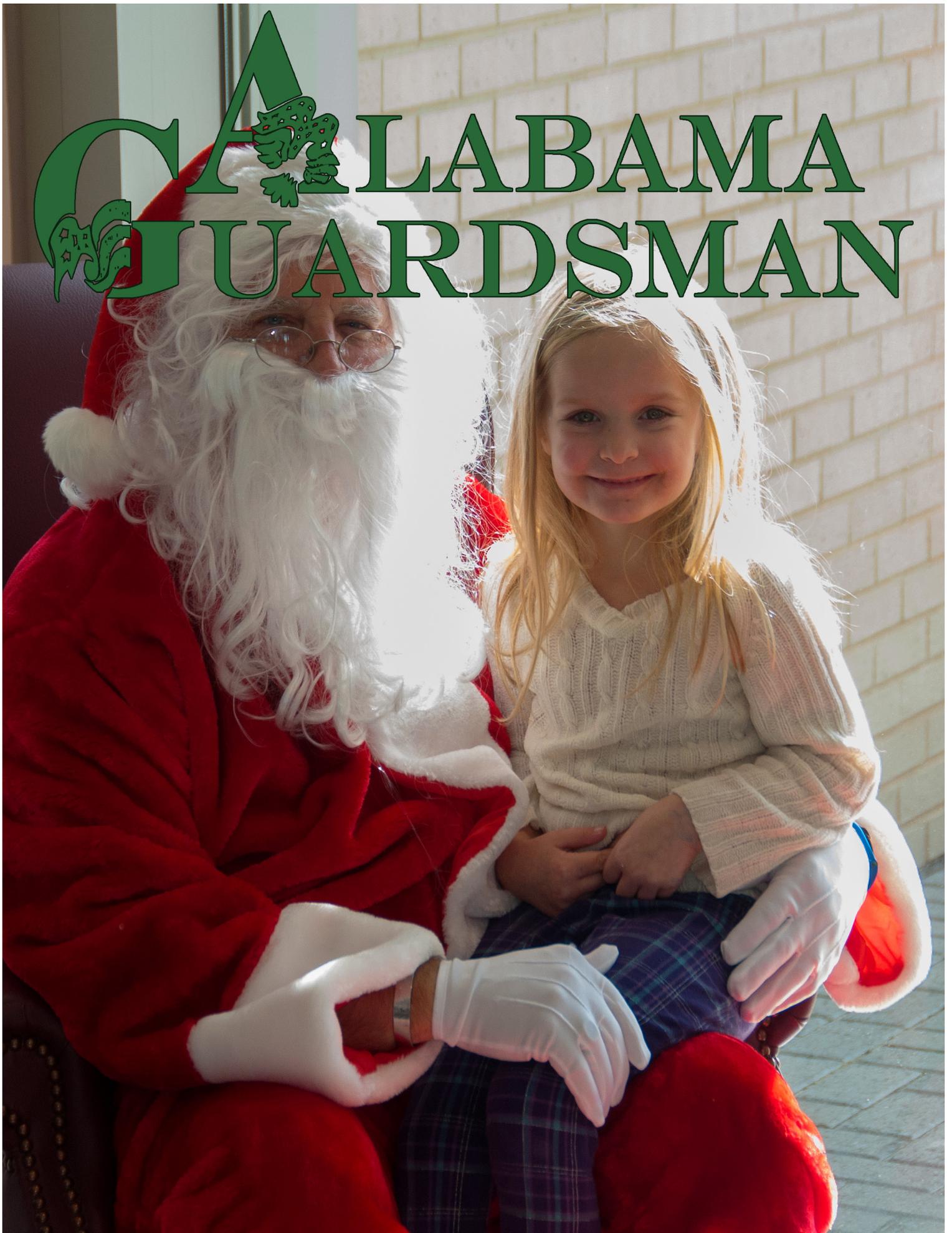


ALABAMA GUARDSMAN



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On The Cover

Teagan Woollard, daughter of Staff Sgt. Joseph Woollard, telling Santa what she wants for Christmas at Joint Force Headquarters in Montgomery, Alabama, Dec.6, 2015(photo by Sgt. William Frye).

Adjutant General

Merry Christmas and happy new year



**Maj. Gen.
Perry Smith**

As we all enjoy the holiday season, may we realize the blessings of freedom, prosperity and peace that continues to be 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 to those who are less fortunate. I also hope that we take time to reflect on the many sacrifices made by our

beloved service members. I hope the season is safely enjoyed by all, and that the joy of the season spreads into the New Year.

I warmly wish all of you –the Soldiers, Airmen, Civilians and Families of the Alabama National Guard –a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year!

State Command Sergeant Major

2015: A Year of growth, accomplishment and readiness



**Command
Sgt. Maj.
Eddie Pike**

December 13th, 2015, the National Guard celebrated its 379th birthday, reminding us of the history of our Nation's oldest and most agile fighting force. For

Guardsmen have served in the face of imminent danger, during Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. Many of these Soldiers and Airmen continue to serve today, deployed overseas and in remote areas away from home. As we reflect on the birthday of the National Guard, we must never forget the sacrifices of the brave men and women who proudly wear the uniform and who take pride in accomplishing their mission.

The National Guard continues to grow in its mission capabilities and unit readiness, and is relied upon heavily by the active components. The Guard remains unique, with a focus on the Citizen-Soldier and Airman, and is more adaptable and affordable than ever before. Amid

budget cuts, challenging times and increased threats to America and our allies, the National Guard remains ready to defend at a moment's notice. The Guard creates and participates in training exercises, reinforcing rules of engagement, and practices preparedness as a basic training rule. The National Guard also maintains its focus on providing localized emergency response in support of natural disasters and dangers that affect communities and neighborhoods across America. In nearly every zip code, the National Guard is available for swift response across the Nation and Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen stand ready to respond when called upon.

Alabama, in particular, has been an added asset to the over-
(Please see 2015, page 8)

379 years, the National Guard has maintained its validity and continues to prove to be among the best military resources the United States has to offer. For many years, members of the National Guard participated in specific military missions, and have become an irreplaceable source of operational value. Tens of thousands of

Simulations Center offers realistic training for 1-167th Infantry Soldiers

by SSG Fredrick Varney
131st MPAD

PELHAM RANGE, Ala. — Over the past few decades, there have been several advances made in the field of virtual technology and simulation training aids in the military.

For instance, the Engagement Skills Trainer (EST) 2000 offers very realistic marksmanship and combat scenario simulations for the majority of both individual and crew-served weapons to include pistols, rifles, shotguns, machine guns, antitank weaponry and grenade launchers. Recently, Soldiers with Delta Company, 1-167th Infantry Battalion, based in Sylacauga, had the opportunity to utilize the state of the art weapons simulation training center located at Pelham Range in order to prepare for their upcoming individual weapons qualification.

“This training simulator is one of the most high-speed things in the Alabama Guard and it really helps us to prepare for individual weapon qualification,” said Pfc. Cooper Armstrong, an infantryman with Delta Company, 1-167th Infantry Battalion.

Armstrong said this was only his second time using the EST weapons simulator since he graduated from basic training approximately 18 months ago.

“It’s an eye-opening experience because the simulator identifies your personal deficiencies and it helps prepare you for live-fire exercises,” said Armstrong.

Staff Sgt. Stephanie Smithson, marksmanship trainer, Alabama Joint Force Headquarters, said the most rewarding part of her job has been training Soldiers headed downrange in support of overseas operations.

“Each simulation system that we offer has its own purpose in preparing Soldiers for the battlefield,” said Smithson. “My favorite simulations system that we have



Fredrick Varney/photo

Pfc. Cooper Armstrong, an infantryman with Delta Company, 1-167th Infantry Battalion, zeroes his weapon during training at the Engagement Skills Trainer (EST) site Nov. 7 on Pelham Range. More than 200 Soldiers with the 1-167th Infantry Battalion cycled through the simulations center over the weekend to prepare for individual weapons qualification.

here is the virtual convoy operations trainer (VCOT) because it forces Soldiers to communicate with one another under stressful simulated conditions.”

Master Sgt. Rick Rainwater, marksmanship trainer NCOIC, Alabama Joint Force Headquarters, said the simulations center offers a cost-effective means of conducting training that greatly reduces the number of rounds spent and also lowers the risk of personal injury.

“The Simulations Center offers a wide variety of virtual trainers that are available to all units across the state,” said Rainwater. “Aside from the EST 2000 marksmanship trainer and the VCOT, we also have other simulations such as the HMMWV Egress Assistance Trainer (HEAT), Virtual Battlespace 2 (VBS2), and Call for Fire Trainer.”

Rainwater encourages Alabama Guard units to request use of the EST and other

available simulations prior to live fire exercises because it sharpens muscle memory and allows Soldiers to get hands-on experience.

“Based on my experiences, I feel the EST 2000 helps Soldiers improve many aspects of shooting such as trigger squeeze, sight picture, breathing and positioning, without wasting costly ammunition,” said Rainwater.

Rainwater said his simulations center staff trains several units all throughout the year and currently operates with 9 personnel.

“Each one of our instructors here at the Pelham Range Simulations Center is well-versed in the basic fundamentals of marksmanship,” said Rainwater. “Our marksmanship instructors are very dedicated to helping Soldiers improve their individual scores and the simulator allows us to do that in a safe and cost-effective manner.”

Snap Shots

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



Katherine Dowd/photo

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama--Col. Derek N. Lipson assumes command of the 20th Special Forces Group during a change of command ceremony here, Nov. 14, 2015.



Contributed/photo

Sgt. Nikeesha Collier of A Company 136 Expeditionary Signal Battalion, who is serving as a direct signal team NCOIC in Afghanistan, participates in the ruck march portion of the 25th Signal Battalion NCO of the Quarter competition Nov. 13, 2015. Collier won the competition which consisted of an Army Physical Fitness Test, a six-mile ruck march, an in-ranks inspection, a demonstration of weapons knowledge, basic Soldier tasks (such as searching a vehicle) and to appearing before a board to demonstrate general military knowledge.



Contributed/photo

HUNTSVILLE, Alabama -- State Command Sergeant Major of the Alabama National Guard Eddie Pike presents Command Sgt. Maj. Dorothy Boatner with her certificate of appointment to command sergeant major during a change of responsibility ceremony for the 279th Army Field Support Brigade here, Dec. 5, 2015. Boatner takes over for out-going Command Sgt. Maj. Lisa Allen, who retires from the Alabama National Guard December 31, 2015, with almost 30 years of federal active service.



Killian Faulk/photo

FORT McCLELLAN, Alabama—Sgt. Bradford Cunningham participates at a Wreaths Across America ceremony at the military cemetery here, Dec. 12, 2015. Several Alabama National Guardsmen participated in the ceremony including a color guard team consisting of: Master Sgt. Robert O’Day, Sgt. Kaitlyn Williams, Sgt. Matthew Weathington, Sgt. Arthur Jones, Sgt. Woodrow Evans and Mr. Brian Canary.



Contributed/photo

WASHINGTON D.C.—Alabama Army National Guard aviators Col. J.R. Bass, State Army Aviation Office, and Chief Warrant Officer 3 Jeff Bahr, B Co. 1-169th, pose after completing the Army 10-Miler here, Oct. 11, 2015.



Contributed/image

VESTAVIA HILLS, Alabama—Senior Airman Phillip Brown (left) and Sgt. Maj. Marcus Tew (right) stand with Brown’s son and Tew’s grandson Jackson (middle) during a Veteran Day event at Vestavia Hills Elementary School here, Nov. 6, 2015.

Do you know?

Meet citizen-soldier Sgt. David Lanier

by Staff Sgt. Christopher Davis
Staff Writer

EAST BREWTON, Alabama. -Active duty Soldiers wear their uniform every day as they carry out their specialized tasks and assigned duties.

National Guardsmen are referred to as Citizen-Soldiers. They have a full-time career in civilian life, but still possess the specialized fields and knowledge like their active duty counterparts.

As Citizen-Soldiers, they interact with the local civilian populace every day and yet still bear the responsibility to don the uniform in service to their community, state and country.

Sgt. David Andrew Lanier, a squad leader with Detachment 1, 1165th Military Police Company, has served the Escambia County School District as well as the Alabama Army National Guard since 1997. He was initially a classroom teacher in Agricultural Science at W.S. Neal High School and is currently the career tech director for Escambia County School District which covers 24 programs at six schools.

“I love the military aspect in my family, because my father served in Vietnam in the Marine Corps,” said Lanier. “I just felt the pride and the sense that I wanted to do it.”

Lanier was able to attend Basic Training and Advanced Individual Training (AIT) under the split option as a teacher at W. S. Neal High School in East Brewton, Alabama. He was in the last AIT military police course held at Fort McClellan, Alabama, before the active duty



Christopher Davis/image

Sgt. David Lanier

post was shut down, and the Military Police school was moved to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.

The experiences Lanier learned during his training and with the 1165th Military Police Company have helped him to become a more proficient administrator for the school district. He utilized his leadership skills from the field in the offices and classrooms around the county school district.

“Being military, we are used to following plans and following orders. We are given a mission and have to complete the task,” said Lanier. “It is same thing as being an administrator. It comes down from the central office; this is what our goal is going to be. We develop a plan just like we would do in the military.”

Lanier has worked with the students of Escambia County for almost 20 years and has seen how students respond to his encouragement and being a role model in balancing both

realms of his professional life. They have seen him preparing groups of the Future Farmers of America for competition, to helping with residents and business owners during the floods that affected the Brewton community, to counseling students on where they want to go in their lives.

“I tell kids to set their goals, be disciplined, be truthful, and to be honest in everything they do,” said Lanier. “I would tell students about discipline, and the one thing that the military teaches about discipline is doing the right thing when no one is watching.”

Lanier expressed how rewarding it is to see students that come back and tell how they could accomplish something they set their mind out to do, no matter the challenges before them.

So now you know one of Alabama’s own Citizen-Soldiers, Sgt. David Lanier, Military Police squad leader and school administrator.

Congratulations to the following retiring Alabama Guardsmen:



E6	Barnett, Shawn N.	31st Chemical Brigade
CW3	Benson, Mark E.	Co. B (-) 711th BSB
E5	Fresh, Lekeylia M.	1208 Quartermaster Company
E4	Helm, Tony B.	B Troop 1-131 Cav
E6	Jeselink, Eddie R. Jr.	Co. D 1 Battalion 131 Aviation
E7	Landrum, John A.	Det. 1 Co. B 115th ESB
E8	Snipes, Bradford	HHC 115th ESB

Editors note: The names of retired Alabama Guardsmen are provided by MACOMs (2015 continued from page 3)

-all effectiveness of the National Guard. Alabama has participated in global initiatives, making our Soldiers and Airmen some of the most sought-after personnel in uniform. We are actively involved in building global and domestic partnerships with the intent of establishing long-term security relationships. Our state partnership, in conjunction with Romania, adds asset value and an alliance that will be relied upon for years to come. Furthermore, the Alabama National Guard has proven to be among the best trained Guards within the country. Our training makes us adaptable, flexible and accessible.

We have guardsmen who are highly skilled in intelligence, reconnaissance, and even remotely piloted aircraft. Some of our most agile are our Special Forces

teams, fully capable of performing the Department of Defense’s special operations missions abroad. The Alabama Air Guard has been instrumental in operations overseas, with our fighter jets (the Red Tails) providing aerial support in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We have Soldiers who are highly trained in cyber intelligence, increasing our readiness in the event of localized cyber-attacks.

The Alabama National Guard also has an increased focus on suicide prevention, sexual assault prevention, and is involved in the Joint Diversity Councils, providing insight and ongoing training. With these initiatives, the Alabama Guard has seen a decrease in assault cases and an increase in overall morale. The Alabama National Guard also honors our wounded veterans, paying visits to those

who are injured and provide necessary assistance as they focus on healing.

With a myriad of military occupations, Alabama Guardsmen are among the best, and they are some of the most motivated professionals within our state. Alabama Guardsmen, Soldiers and Airmen alike, are focused on readiness and mission accomplishment and always ready to serve.

As we prepare for a new year, I can say that the Alabama National Guard is comprised of a large group of Soldiers and Airmen who make our state among the most prepared. I am proud to serve among the best and I am convinced that 2016 will be an even greater year, full of Alabama Guard accomplishments, achievements and greater mission success.

Director of the Air National Guard to Retire

by Staff Sgt. Christopher Davis
Staff Writer

MONTGOMERY Alabama. – Lt. Gen. Stanley E. Clarke, director of the Air National Guard for the National Guard Bureau and former commander of the 187th Fighter Wing at Dannelly Field in Montgomery, is set to retire after 34 years of service.

Clarke served in the Air Force, Air Force Reserves and Air National Guard over the course of his career.

“I have had tremendous opportunities; I have had great mentors,” said Clarke. “I think Gen. Welsh, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, captured it well when he said he joined the Air Force because he loved to fly; he stayed in the Air Force because he loved the people.”

Clarke said the Alabama Air National Guard is an integral part of the United States Air Force missions. The contributions of every airmen and officer serve the larger picture of national defense.

“The Air National Guard, we do three basic things: one of them is warfighting, which I tell people we are a proven choice,” said Clarke. “For homeland operations, I tell them, we are the first choice, and for security operations that we do on behalf of the nation and domestically with partners, we are the enduring choice, because we have an enduring relationship with the people.”

“The Alabama Air National Guard will continue to serve and grow in upcoming years,” said Clark. “There will be the need to modernize alongside the Air Force as a total force partner. This will include newer equipment, platforms and aircraft as the Air National Guard will continue to serve their states and the nation.

The future Citizen-Airmen who make it a priority to join the Air National Guard will find opportunities for personal, as well as, professional growth. The experiences and relationships developed help define the



Christopher Davis/photo

Brig. Gen Paul Jacobs, assistant adjutant general of the Alabama National Guard, presents Lt. Gen. Stanley E. Clarke, director of the Air National Guard, the Air National Guard Strategic Planning System Coin. Clarke briefed the senior staff at the Alabama Air National Guard headquarters.

characteristics that develops the cohesion that is unique to the National Guard.”

“It is place where everybody knows your name when you show up,” said Clarke. “Even if it is on a drill weekend, you always feel like you are valued added and an esteemed member of the U.S. military.”

The relationships between the members of a unit is key to the cohesiveness how a unit approaches any problem collectively and not individually, said Clarke. Once the Airmen and staffs see how well the senior leaders work with each other, they will emulate the same professional relationship.

It brings a great sense of pride and honor when people walk up to Clarke to shake his hand and thank him for his service. He suggested that for a younger member in the military this should hold a deeper meaning to be so highly esteemed in our society.

Over his 34 years of service, Clarke reflected on the event that summed up the greatest challenge and reward. While he was the wing commander of the 187th, the unit was part of the 410th Air Expeditionary Wing based out of Jordan for the beginning

stages of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

His wing was responsible for constructing the infrastructure and expansion for their base, base operations and combat operations. Clarke’s core team was responsible for the 24-hour combat operations and all of the support functions to maintain it over the course of several months.

“The day when we finally shut it all down, I looked back and went ‘wow, we did this well,’” said Clarke. “I was extremely proud of the people and the training we invested into this. It all paid off.”

Clarke will complete his military service in December and continues to look forward to how he could serve his branch of service. He wishes to share the insights he has learned and observed over his career with the enlisted and officer development courses as a guest speaker at the national level on how the Air National Guard will continue to serve the Air Force and nation.

“I will not be in uniform, but I can still talk to them about their service and what it means about what they will do in the future and how valued they are,” said Clarke.