

Alabama Guardsman

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A publication for the citizen-Soldiers & Airmen of Alabama



In this issue:

The Adjutant General and State Command Sgt. Maj. Contingency contracting team breaks new ground in Afghanistan Pg. 3

SnapShots Pg. 4-5

Guard defends Gulf Coast against oil spill Pg. 6

RSP sets up soldiers for success pg. 7

Military funeral honors team displays selfless service Pg.9

Elements come together for live-fire training Pg. 16

Survivor Outreach Services helps families cope with loss

by Sheila Holifield
Staff Writer

MONTGOMERY, Ala. – With the presence of the National Guard increasingly growing in support of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Alabama National Guard has launched a program developed by the United States Army, to help the families of fallen Soldiers and Airmen.

The Survivor Outreach Services (SOS) program was put in place approximately two years ago by the active military component and rolled out to the National Guard last May. The program demonstrates the National Guard’s commitment to families of the fallen.

“The SOS program is very important,” said Damon Wallace, the Alabama Nation-

al Guard’s SOS coordinator. “So many family members go ignored after a service member’s death.”

Many times after the loss of a loved one, there are unresolved issues or questions that may surface months or even years down the road, he added.

Wallace is one to know—a survivor himself. He lost one of his sons, Capt. Clayton Wallace, a B-1 Pilot in the United States Air Force, in 2007. Because he was not his son’s primary or secondary beneficiary, he and his wife went almost unnoticed.

“My son was the second of six children, so we had a lot of family members that were not his beneficiaries, but were still grieving,” said Wallace. “A program like SOS would have been very helpful for our family.”

The outreach program is available to all survivors. Rank, age, length of service and the manner of death of the service member have no influence in the availability of the program.

“We want to bridge the gap between the survivors and the benefits and services that

are available to them,” said Wallace.

Although the benefits are different for everyone, one that is available to all family members is grief counseling—something Wallace said is very important for family members to know.

Other benefits include short-term and long-term case management, benefits counseling, financial planning and legal assistance.

For many like Wallace, the tragedy of losing a loved one never goes away.

“You just learn how to cope with it and keep moving on,” he said.

While the SOS program is still evolving, it is designed to identify the needs of those touched by the loss of a service member and make them feel welcomed and encouraged to be a part of the National Guard for as long as they wish.

Dating back to 2007, Alabama has an estimated 200 survivors of fallen Soldiers and Airmen. Of those, approximately 175 live in the state of Alabama.



Alabama Guardsman

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On the Cover

Soldiers from the 711th Brigade Support Battalion out of Citronelle work on HESCO barriers on Dauphin Island. Members of the 711th were helping prepare the Alabama Gulf Coast for the effects of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Please see story on Pg. 6 (photo by Jamie Brown) .

Adjutant General

Guard fights for share of DoD budget



**Maj. Gen.
Abner C. Blalock**

As we approach the fourth quarter of Fiscal year (FY) 2010, we are all focused on execution of training plans, budgets, and critical activities that will make 2010

a successful year at every level. We have almost 500 soldiers engaged on the Gulf of Mexico, more than 800 currently deployed for the war on terror, 900 involved in reset from a recent deployment, and 1200 preparing for a deployment. We are also

preparing for what is forecast to be one of the worst hurricane seasons in history. While these critical activities consume us all on a daily basis, we must keep focus on the actions at the national level that will affect our National Guard as early as FY 2012.

The Department of Defense is working FY 2012 budgets that will be reduced by other national priorities and have smaller supplemental expenditures associated with success in Iraq and Afghanistan. Many efforts are in progress to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of processes within DoD. Unfortunately, these improvements will not provide relief from coming budget reductions. Within the Army, force struc-

ture reductions are coming. Within the Air Force, replacement of aging aircraft is to be canceled or scaled back.

All of these actions will affect your National Guard. The TAGs of all 54 states, territories and district are working to ensure the value of the National Guard is fully considered in these Pentagon deliberations. The National Guard consumes less than 6% of the DoD budget and provides almost half of the Department's Land and Air capabilities! This value cannot be ignored in the money fight. With its significant Combat Support and Combat Service Support capabilities, **(Please see *Budget*, page 14)**

State Command Sergeant Major

Learning is a key to becoming a successful leader



**Command Sgt.
Maj.
William H. Jones**

Since accepting the job as State Command Sergeant Major, I have had many opportunities to interact with the Soldiers and Airmen within our state and even overseas. I am constantly reminded what fantastic jobs

our service members are doing. With this in mind, I go to work each and every day doing my best to represent you and our state in a

positive, professional manner.

When I enlisted in the Army 27 years ago I had high expectations of what I thought leaders should be, or at least I did once I completed basic and AIT. Not much has changed over the years on the basic principles of leadership; the Army defines leadership as the "process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation..." I can remember one of my first board questions as being what three words describe the Army Leadership Framework? I knew from FM 22-100 (now FM 6-22) that the answer was BE-KNOW-DO. NCOs lead by example. I am reminded of a saying by retired Maj. Gen.

Edwin Wright - "know what right looks like." As simple as this sounds, it is a good reminder of our responsibilities as Soldiers and NCOs. The seven Army Values of Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage provide a basis of what a leader should BE. Combine this with the personal attributes of fitness of mental, physical, and emotional well-being and you have the character necessary to lead. No one is born with all the answers and NCOs and leaders are no exception. In order to KNOW, you must apply yourself to the study of your profession, whether written or observed **(Please see *Learning*, page 14)**

Snap Shots

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



George B. Smith/photo

Soldiers with the 711th Brigade Support Battalion, from Citronelle, Ala., put up four miles of HESCO barriers to protect the Alabama coast line from oil, expected to hit the coast from an offshore oil leak.



Bethany Brown/photo

A gunner of Alpha Battery of 117th Field Artillery Battalion confirms the quadrant and coordinates for a 155mm howitzer cannon. The battery participated in a battalion live fire training exercise with Soldier of the 151st Aviation Regiment providing air support. The training exercise gave an opportunity to train using the artillery pieces while increasing morale and confidence among the Soldiers of the battery.



Bethany Brown/photo

Master Sgt. Aaron Edwards leads soldiers in the Recruit Sustainment Program (RSP) as they learn drill and ceremonies. The RSP is designed to prepare recruits for Basic Training.



Master Sgt. Lisa B. McDay (left), 187th Fighter Wing and Staff Sgt. Kevin A. Tarpley (right), 131st Cavalry, were named the Alabama Army and Air National Guard's 2010 recipients of the Governor's Outstanding Servicemember's Award. McDay and Tarpley were chosen for the award on behalf of their dedication and professional military service (photos by Katrina Timmons).



Alabama Army National Guard Recruiting Team #7 was named the Elite Team for the second year in a row, recruiting more than 200 enlistees in both 2008 and 2009. Members of the team are pictured here with the Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Abner C. Blalock (far right), Recruiting and Retention Director, Lt. Col. William Taylor (behind Blalock) and State Command Sergeant Major Bill Jones (far left). Pictured from left to right in civilian attire are members of the 2009 Elite Team: Sgt. Anthony R. Vaughn, Sgt. Brandon W. Raybon, Sgt. 1st Class Bruce M. Reeves, Master Sgt. Ronald Jones, Sgt. 1st Class Marion A. Pruitt II, Staff Sgt. David B. Davis, Master Sgt. Joe Holley (Team 7 NCOIC), Sgt. 1st Class Joseph C. Witherington, Sgt. 1st Class Brocric L. McCall and Sgt. 1st Class Cornelius J. Calhoun.

Contributed photo

Guard defends Gulf Coast against oil spill

by Jamie Brown
Senior Editor

Alabama Guardmembers worked long hours in the sweltering summer sun, building barriers across miles of Alabama Gulf Coast to repel a coming invader. The enemy was an unusual one, millions of gallons of oil heading for the white sands of Alabama's beaches.

Almost immediately after the Deepwater Horizon oil rig exploded, releasing a steady stream of oil into the Gulf of Mexico, several hundred Alabama Guardmembers began working to build barriers to protect Alabama's coast.

"We're putting up HESCO baskets to prevent oil from getting up on the beach," said Spc. Joseph Huckabee of B Co. 711th Brigade Support Battalion out of Citronelle. "Right now we're in the process of going back and putting the liner in. That helps keep the sand stabilized. Once the oil enters the liner, they have an agent that they put in there that turns the oil into almost a rubbery form, which makes it easier to remove the oil."

According to Huckabee, his unit was new to this type of mission, but caught on quickly.

"We fell right into place," he said. "They showed us basically how to set them up, how they wanted them set up, where to locate them on the edge of the water. Actually we just fell right into place, just like a normal job."

It's also a job that requires constant maintenance.

"We've gone back on numerous occasions and basically reinforced a lot of HESCOs, making sure that the sand is put in properly, going back and making sure that they're aligned properly," said Sgt. Edward Brewster of B Co. 711th BSB.

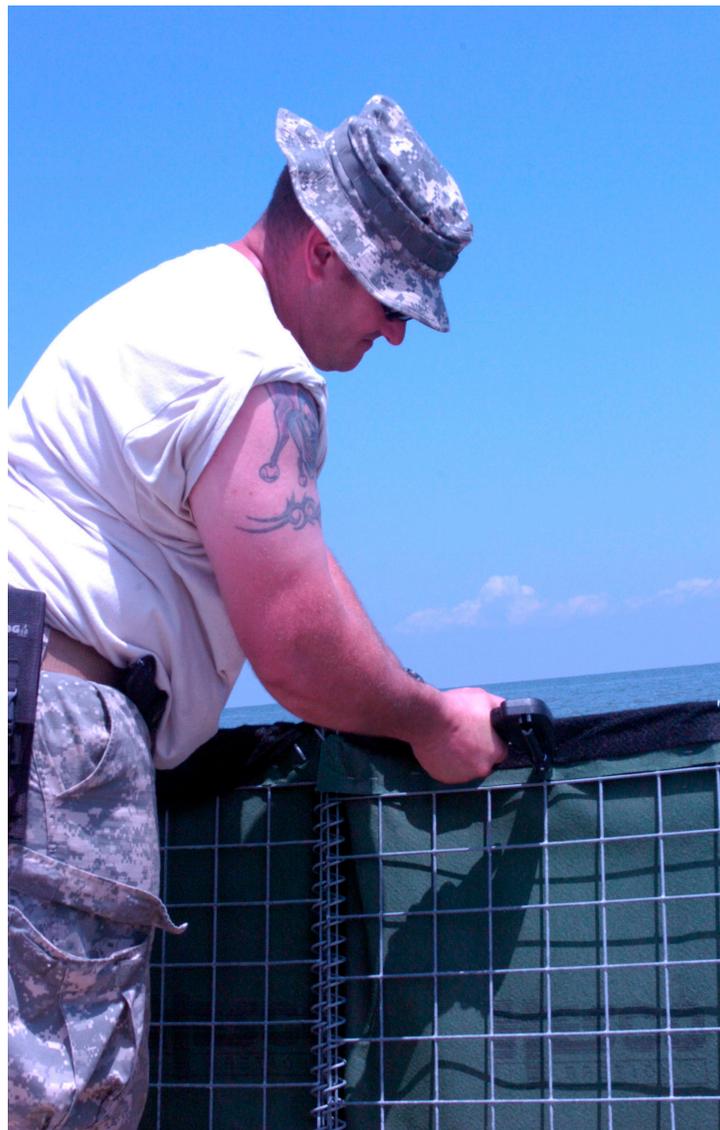
Members of the 711th said that they found this duty meaningful, because they were protecting an area that means a lot to them.

"I have a daughter and family that come enjoy the beach, and I think it's real good what we're doing, and for the Governor to send us out here to do it," said Huckabee. "Dauphin Island has been here a long time and survived a lot of hurricanes, we don't want to let an accident come in and destroy it."

"I grew up 15 minutes from Dauphin Island," said Brewster. "It's important for me to protect this island, because I remember catching my first fish on Dauphin Island. I have a history with this beach, barbecues, family vacations, me seeing this beach and having been brought up on it, it's important for me to come out and protect it."

And those who live in the area are grateful for the work the Guard is doing. "The residents love us," said Brewster. "They come up and give us the thumbs up. They offer us food and water and tell us to keep up the good work."

For the foreseeable future, Alabama Guardmembers will continue to do whatever they can to protect the Alabama



Jamie Brown/photo

Sgt. Tony Buscaino, 711th BSB reinforces a HESCO barrier with liner at Dauphin Island. Members of the 711th were preparing for the effects of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

coast. The Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Abner C. Blalock is happy with the job that Guardmembers have done so far.

"Our soldiers working the barrier mission have displayed their innovation and commitment to accomplishing their mission on Dauphin Island and Fort Morgan," he said. "They reflect the commitment of the National Guard to protect our citizens and our way of life, at home and overseas."

RSP sets up soldiers for certain success

by Sheila Holifield
Staff Writer

FORT MCCLELLAN, Ala. — More than 300 Alabama National Guard Soldiers from the northern part of the state gathered to participate in the Best Warrior Challenge June 5 and 6. The 22nd Recruiting and Retention Battalion's Recruit Sustainment Program (RSP) Detachment conducted the event as part of their training for new Soldiers.

"In the RSP, our main goal is to ensure new Soldiers who enlist into the Alabama National Guard are prepared for basic training, and events like this one help us do that," said Capt. Darold Carson, commander for the RSP Detachment.

Although, the Best Warrior Challenge training event has been held in past years, Carson said, this is a fresh take on it, and something the RSP eventually would like to extend throughout the entire state.

"As a whole, the RSP's training is a good way to get Soldiers into a military mindset and motivated for the training they will encounter," said Carson.

While events like the Best Warrior Challenge are designed to prepare new Soldiers both mentally and physically, Carson said the training does so much more.

"Our biggest obstacle in the RSP, is training pipeline losses," he said.

From the time a new Soldier swears into the military to the time that Soldier is qualified in their Military Occupational Specialty (MOS), they are considered to be in a training pipeline. If the Soldier does not complete any part of their training, they are categorized as a training pipeline loss.

Currently, the Alabama National Guard's training losses average approximately thirty percent, which is far better than the active duty training loss percentage, he added.

"This program not only saves the government millions of dollars in training losses each year, but it also provides units trained and qualified Soldiers, which makes a



Sheila Holifield/photo

Recent Basic Training and Advanced Individual Training graduates recite the Soldier's Creed during the Best Warrior Challenge event June 5. The 22nd Recruiting and Retention Battalion's Recruit Sustainment Program (RSP) Detachment conducted the event as part of their training for new Soldiers.

big impact on unit readiness," said Carson.

Sgt. 1st Class Robert Cornett, the noncommissioned officer in charge of Alabama's RSP, Task Force North, agreed with Carson, and added, "Not only is the RSP successful in preparing Soldiers to complete their training, but it also helps develop esprit de corps among the Soldiers within the Alabama National Guard."

Training events like the Best Warrior Challenge give Soldiers an environment where they can train side by side with Soldiers from detachments throughout the state, said Cornett.

"The Soldiers that are involved in the RSP consistently say when they get down-range, they are more prepared than those among other services in the military," said Cornett. "We have found that Soldiers who

went through RSP prior to going to basic training, have a higher success rate and they are typically a top graduate in their training class."

Cornett said, for a new Soldier, the RSP can seem daunting and overwhelming, but each task teaches the Soldiers the basic skills they need to successfully complete their training.

Pvt. Charles Fann, an infantry Soldier with 1st Battalion, 167th Infantry, boasts about the impact the RSP made on him. Fann, who recently became MOS qualified as an infantryman, was a part of the RSP and said he was definitely more prepared than his peers in basic training.

"Across the board we were better prepared and even more motivated," said Fann.

(Please see RSP, page 14)

Contingency Contracting Team breaks new ground in Afghanistan

by Katrina Timmons
Staff Writer

On April 13, the Alabama Army National Guard deployed its first contingency contracting team (CCT) to Afghanistan. Capt. Todd Floyd, Capt. Jeffery Campbell, Staff Sgt. Daniel Martin and Staff Sgt. Lesly “Rich” Richardson make up the four man team also known as the 1960th CCT. The team is only the second CCT nationwide the Army National Guard has deployed to Afghanistan.

According to Lt. Col. David Cooley, battalion commander for the 1169th Contingency Contracting Battalion, the 1960th will augment the contracting staff of the Joint Contracting Command – Iraq/Afghanistan (JCC-I/A) and assist them in procuring needed commodities, services and construction projects in support of operations in the joint theater.

“Basically our job is to help grow the infrastructure for the U.S. military and the Afghanistan National Army,” explained Capt. Todd Floyd, commander of the 1960th. “When a large base is established, we move onto a more geographically separated location and build a smaller base there.”

Cooley says the team will also assist commanders in the planning and execution of Commander’s Emergency Response Programs (CERPs) which focus on urgent humanitarian relief and reconstruction projects for local populations.

The team is scheduled to



Bethany Brown/photo

(From left to right) Staff Sgt. Daniel Martin, Grant, Ala., Capt. Todd Floyd, Cullman, Ala., Capt. Jeffery Campbell, Madison, Ala., and Staff Sgt. Lesly “Rich” Richardson, Toney, Ala., stand ready to deploy as the Alabama Army National Guard’s first contingency contracting team (CCT). The four men make up the 1960th CCT and is the second CCT from the Army National Guard to deploy to Afghanistan.

be on active duty for 400 days, including a brief training period at Camp Shelby, Miss., before heading to Afghanistan.

Cooley says the team has undergone extensive training in preparation of their mission. “Team members were required to complete two years of progressively difficult on-the-job training to become Level II certified in contracting,” explained Cooley. “They were also required to complete coursework from the Defense Acquisition University.”

Floyd said that in order to be on the team, members must have a bachelor’s degree and at least 24 hours of business credits. “We are trained and ready,” said

Floyd. “In my opinion, this team is the cream of the crop and I’d match them up to any unit in Alabama.”

Between the four team members, they have seven deployments under their belts. Some team members have already deployed together during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The Soldiers on the team come from various military and civilian backgrounds. Cooley says this gives them a varied and unique skill set. “The main factor in determining the success of the 1960th is their dedication and maturity, both as individuals and as a team,” said Cooley.

Military Funeral Honors team displays selfless service

by Katrina Timmons
Staff Writer

When the Soldiers of the Alabama National Guard's Military Funeral Honors (MFH) team conduct a funeral honors ceremony, it is nothing short of breathtaking. The men and women who make up the program are extremely professional and take their job very seriously.

In 2009, Alabama's MFH Soldiers performed 1,454 services and are on track to perform some 2,000 services during calendar year 2010. On average, they conduct 160 services a month and have performed 22 services in one day.

"They never take a day off," said 1st Lt. Matthew P. Spivey, MFH officer-in-charge. "They work 28 out of 30 days a month; they get two days off a month to go to drill." Spivey says that some of these Soldiers have worked up to 360 days in one year.

It is because of their dedication to duty and selfless service that these remarkable men and women are so professional.

According to Spivey, Saturday and Sunday are their busiest days of the week, averaging approximately 20 services per weekend. "We performed eight services New Year's Eve, two services Christmas Eve and one full honors at 10 o'clock Easter morning," said Spivey. "We've done services as early as 6 a.m. and as late as 8 p.m. Normally we have 48 hours prior notice on services, but many times we only have 24 hours notice." Spivey says they have performed a service with as little as two hours notice.

Spivey says that Alabama's MFH's Soldiers are the best he's ever seen. "Unlike training, what we do are real life missions." Spivey



Katrina Timmons/photo

Sgt. Gregg Bearden with an Alabama National Guard honor guard detail salutes the colors during a training mission at the Alabama National Cemetery in Montevallo, Ala.

explained that there are no second chances.

Sgt. Nathaniel Owen of Arab, Ala., has been working with the program since August 2009. "I can empathize with the families," said Owen. Owen lost his paternal grandfather, a Navy veteran, in 2002. It was then that Owen was introduced to his first military funeral. "I knew then that if I ever received an opportunity to serve on an honor guard, I would take it."

Owen says that he's performed several funerals for his friends and family. "I don't get complacent with it," said Owen. "I treat every funeral as if it were my grandfather's."

Sgt. Gregg Bearden of Cull-

man, Ala., echoed Owen's humbling outlook on what the job means to him. "As a war veteran, it is a privilege to honor those who came before me." Bearden has been working with the program since January 2008 and has performed more than 600 military funeral services.

Owen says that he still gets goose bumps when he hears TAPS. "I get chills down my spine every time," said Owen. But for Owen and Bearden the most significant part of the program is when they present the flag to the next of kin.

Spivey says all his honor guard detail Soldiers are warned during training that "it may happen when you present your first flag or it may happen the 500th time you present, but eventually, you are going to cry."

Chaplains corps adds to its ranks with new graduates

by Katrina Timmons
Staff Writer

As the Alabama National Guard continues its efforts in support of the war on terror, the need for chaplains continues to rise as well. Currently, only 18 chaplains are assigned to the 11,000 plus Soldiers and family members of the Alabama Army National Guard, leaving 13 empty slots waiting to be filled. For Air Force Col. Robert Hicks, full time support chaplain for the Alabama National Guard, the need for chaplains grows with every crisis.

“There is something always going on,” said Hicks. “We have at least one major crisis a week in the Alabama Army Guard.” Hicks says that growing the Chaplain’s Corps is a critical issue. “We need more people to do the ministry for our Soldiers.”

Things are looking up for the Alabama Army Guard’s Chaplain’s Corps however. Recently, six chaplain candidates graduated from the Army’s Chaplain Training School at Fort Jackson, S.C. Once the candidates graduate from seminary school, they will be able to take their place among the ranks as chaplains in the Alabama Army Guard. Until then, the candidates will serve under the supervision and guidance of a chaplain, learning from their experiences on how to do ministry in the Guard.

2nd Lt. Edward Solomon, a recent graduate from the Army’s Chaplain Training School, says that there is such a critical need for chaplains now due to the high stress of deployments. “Sometimes a Soldier or family member just needs someone to talk to,” said Solomon. “And it is our purpose, as chaplains, to minister to the Soldiers and their families, and to let them know that someone is there to listen and that their issues or problems are valid, no matter what they are.”



contributed/photo

1st row pictured from left to right is 2nd Lt. Jon Whitley, Col. Robert Hicks, State Chaplain Col. Coy Hallmark and Capt. Robert Baylis. 2nd row pictured from left to right is 2nd Lt. Meredith Davenport, 2nd Lt. Edward Solomon, 2nd Lt. Adam Cochran and 2nd Lt. James “Mike” Chitwood. Whitley, Baylis, Davenport, Solomon, Cochran and Chitwood are all recent graduates from the Army’s Chaplain Training School located at Fort Jackson, S.C. Once the chaplain candidates have finished their seminary schools, they will take their place among the ranks as new chaplains in the Alabama Army National Guard.

Hicks says that one of the main things he tries to instill into the new chaplains is the importance of being out with the Soldiers. “It is important for these chaplains to learn about the units and the Soldiers they are assigned to,” said Hicks. “It’s called ministry of presence. If you’re attached to a fighter wing, then know the difference between an F16A model and a F16C model.” He explained that getting to know a unit, its Soldiers and their jobs can break down barriers of communication.

“We’re not here for them just to come to us,” said 2nd Lt. James “Mike” Chitwood, a chaplain candidate. “We must

get to know them and what they are about so we can better facilitate their needs.”

Another barrier chaplains face is the difference in people’s faiths. Hicks says a chaplain has to be the chaplain to the whole unit regardless of the flavor, be it Baptist, Catholic, protestant or even atheist. “During chaplaincy school, we were all thrown into the mix; rabbis, priests, protestants, Methodists and many others,” said Hicks. “But, through that process, we all got to know and respect each other as people.” Hicks says it’s true pluralism and it is a strength that the military chaplaincy models for the rest of the world.

Miss Fountain City coaches kids in K.A.R.M.A.

by Katrina Timmons
Staff Writer

On April 10, the children of the members of the Alabama National Guard's 166th Engineer Company, Winfield, Ala., the 117th Air Refueling Wing, Birmingham, Ala., and the 187th Fighter Wing, Montgomery, Ala., received a special visit from Miss Fountain City 2010, Jessica Brookshire.

Brookshire spoke with the children about her anti-bullying campaign KARMA. The acronym stands for Kids Against Meanness and Aggression.

The campaign is a part of Brookshire's grassroots initiative to stamp out bullying among Alabama school-aged children. She started the campaign a year ago as part of her personal platform with the Miss America Organization. But Brookshire says that she's been fighting bullying since she was seven years old.

"I remember when I was seven a boy told me that I was too ugly to have a boyfriend," Brookshire explained. "I went home that day and looked at myself in the mirror and I remember thinking – ok – this is what ugly looks like."

Though the teasing and bullying stopped when she went to college, she never forgot the profound effect it had on her personal growth and her self esteem.

Alabama National Guard Child and Youth Coordinator Kelli Hill has been working with military children for more than five years. In that time she has noticed a growing problem with bullying.

"Bullying can have a detrimental effect in a child's emotional, psychological and physiological growth," said Hill. "It is imperative that we teach our children and youth how to circumvent these negative effects."

Brookshire explained to the youth that their words hold merit. "Think of the



Katrina Timmonsphoto

Alabama National Guard Family Support Director Chief Warrant Officer 5 Steve Missildine (left) and Katherine Thomas (center) are pictured here with Miss Fountain City 2010, Jessica Brookshire (right). Thomas met Brookshire during a Yellow Ribbon event in Birmingham, Ala., April 10. Brookshire spoke with Thomas and other military children about her platform KARMA: Kids Against Ridicule Meanness and Aggression.

feelings of others before you speak," said Brookshire.

"The bottom line is that it's not up to me to stop bullying. It's not up to your parents or your teachers or even your legislatures. It's up to you to make it better and to put an end to bullying, because you're the ones who are doing it."

Brookshire talked about the recent suicides and school shootings that have taken place in the last few years. According to Brookshire, it has been documented that every single school shooting in the United States has been in direct correlation with a child who has been bullied in school.

"Your words have consequences," said Brookshire. "You have to be very

careful of the things you say."

She also spoke to the youth about social media such as Facebook, Twitter and MySpace. She told them the story of thirteen year old Megan Meier who took her life after being relentlessly bullied on MySpace for two hours.

Brookshire is currently working with Tina Meier, Megan's mom, to help strengthen bullying laws in Alabama.

"It is my belief that no one should be criticized for his or her physical appearance, economic status, race, gender, hobbies or beliefs," said Brookshire. "And it is my dream that one day we will see a generation of children who encourage and help one another rather than tear each other down with words."

Romanian officials observe Guard's response operations

by Andrew Richardson
Staff Writer

Four Romanian officials recently spent a busy week in Alabama observing emergency situations and how state, county and municipal officials cope with them.

The visit was part of the State Partnership Program (SPP). Created by NATO after the Cold War, the SPP pairs state Guard organizations with former communist countries in a program intended to establish or normalize relations in a new and positive manner.

Romania, the first Warsaw Pact nation to enter the program, was paired with the Alabama Guard in August 1994. Since then, Alabama Guard and Romanian military personnel have participated in numerous training exercises, activities and assistance visits in both Alabama and Romania.

On their recent trip, Romanian personnel visited the Alabama National Guard Joint Force Headquarters Joint Operations Center to observe an exercise intended to improve hurricane response within the Alabama Guard.

While visiting, the Romanians also got to witness a real-world response as more than 100 Alabama Guardsmen were called to active duty to support efforts to combat the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

"The familiarization visit by members of the Romanian Government Inspectorate for Emergency Situations provided an opportunity for the Alabama National Guard and the Alabama Emergency Management Agency to share best practices in responding to catastrophic disasters with our partner nation," said Alabama



David Arnoldphoto

Romanian SPP visitors receive a brief on hurricane response coordination on a recent visit to Task Force South Headquarters, Fort Whiting, Ala.

National Guard SPP Coordinator Lt. Col. William A. Overby. "The visit provided an inside look of our planning process as we prepare to respond to natural and manmade disasters."

During the trip, the delegation visited the Alabama Emergency Management headquarters in Clanton, Shelby County Sheriff Chris Curry's office and the Mobile County Emergency Management Agency office. While talk often centered around hurricanes and hurricane response, the oil spill also provided the chance for the delegation to see how adaptable plans can be.

Though there are no hurricanes in Romania, the visitors said they could certainly take the ideas and structure of what they saw and apply to any emergency situation in their

home country.

When the partnership program began in 1994, it included military support operations. Since that time, the program has expanded and now includes the exchange of advice and assistance with environmental, industrial, educational, agricultural, and information technology issues.

"The members of the Romanian delegation were all highly trained, professional emergency responders," said Maj. Steven Messer, a member of the Alabama National Guard who has taken part in these visits in the past. "Continuing the State Partnership Program between Alabama and Romania promises continued dividends for both entities in the future."

Guard spreads awareness of sexual assault

by Katrina Timmons
Staff Writer

According to Alabama Guard Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Rhonda McCrummen, one in four individuals is sexually assaulted every minute within the United States. With those kinds of statistics, it's no wonder why the Department of Defense has dedicated an entire month to sexual assault awareness.

Throughout the month of April, many events and projects have taken place in an effort to better educate servicemembers on the abuse that takes place within the structured ranks of our military community.

McCrummen says awareness is the key to preventing sexual harassment and sexual assault in the National Guard.

"We must build awareness in our daily workforce community and collectively reach out to our traditional Soldiers," said McCrummen. "It's going to take teamwork to have prevention in the Alabama Guard."

From unit briefs to vigils on the front steps of the State Capitol building, McCrummen has made it a personal challenge to educate every Soldier and Airman in the Alabama Guard on sexual assault prevention. McCrummen says the trend is acquaintance assault, Soldier on Soldier, and usually occurs between members of the same unit. "Sexual assault destroys a unit," said McCrummen. "Our victims hurt from assault as well as the peer pressure from fellow Soldiers."



Contributed/photo

Alabama Guard Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Rhonda McCrummen, explains the meaning behind the Sexual Assault Prevention clothes line during a sexual assault awareness event at Troy University in Dothan on April 21. The T-shirts displayed on the line have been decorated by sexual assault victims in the state of Alabama.

At a recent awareness program at Troy University Dothan, McCrummen joined forces with several other state agencies and displayed a physical representation of sexual assault. Twenty-one T-shirts were arranged on a clothes line, each decorated by a sexual assault victim. On the front of the shirts are words and drawings illustrating the victim's pain and suffering. The size of the shirts is symbolic of the age at which the abuse started.

"From a counselor's perspective, this is very therapeutic to these victims," explained McCrummen. "It gives them a realization of what has happened to them and how they've overcome it – if in fact they have overcome it."

McCrummen shared the clothes line with the Soldiers of the 440th

Theater Opening Element in Linden, Ala., during a sexual assault brief on April 25. She spoke with the Soldiers about the importance of leadership to be aware that it is a problem within the Alabama Guard and to put measures in place to prevent it from happening.

"The number one contributing factor to sexual assault with the Guard is alcohol," explained McCrummen. "Every case I've had thus far has involved alcohol."

McCrummen told the Soldiers of the 440th to hold themselves accountable, enforce curfews and no drinking orders and to utilize the buddy system. "Sexual assault is a military career ender," McCrummen explained. "The Adjutant General will not tolerate sexual assault in the Alabama National Guard."

(Budget continued from page 3)

the National Guard also provides the Nation's Strategic Military Depth for full spectrum Army operations. Unfortunately, it is a struggle to have our story told at the various working group and team levels within the Department during the vast array of pre-decisional efforts underway.

Your actions as Airmen and

Soldiers of the National Guard is our story! Others see what you have done, and spread the word. It is true in War and in Peace. I encourage each of you to always represent our organization as the professionals you are. I encourage each of you to remain aware of the issues facing you and your organization, and to engage to make your voice heard so that our elected repre-

sentatives are also involved.

I want to thank you and commend you for your service to each other, our state and our country! You are succeeding every day on every mission. I am confident of continued success as we shape changes in the coming years! Proud To Serve!

(Learning continued from page 3)

through role models or mentors. Very early in my career, I used to hear the old sergeants say that there was no use in reading the manuals, because there was no book answer that applied to every situation. I read them anyway because I understood that I didn't have all the answers, and I knew that knowledge, combined with personal experience, led to better understanding and decision making ability. A leader must be competent in their job; Soldiers depend on the leader to understand the capabilities and limitations of their unit (Know your Soldiers) in order to safely employ those capabilities for a positive outcome. Knowing your job and Soldiers comes

with a price for the successful leader – it means studying the FMs and ARs, it means taking the correspondence courses and it means taking the time and effort to attend schools that contribute to your success. It also means learning to communicate effectively with subordinates and superiors as well. When you know your profession, Soldiers and other leaders will know they can rely on your expertise under any condition.

In order to be a leader, you must take action. This is what leaders DO, take charge and get the job done, while working within the parameters of the Army Values, your values and what you have learned about your

profession and Soldiers. What you DO is a combination of your personal skills, attributes and decision making experience. Learning to make good decisions is a hard journey fraught with failures and successes alike. Reading books about leadership, such as the recommended reading list contained in FM 7-22.7 or FM 6-22, provides insight for the new and old alike on leadership traits and styles that have proven successful to others.

“When we assumed the Soldier, we did not lay aside the Citizen. Gen. George Washington, 1775. Bayonet 7, out.

(RSP continued from page 7)

Almost every squad leader and platoon leader assigned were Soldiers that had been through an RSP, he added.

Fann, who is from Huntsville, Ala., said he joined the Alabama National Guard to gain more discipline and have a chance to go back to college.

“Because of the RSP training, basic training was not such a shock to the system,” said Fann.

Pvt. 1st Class Katrina Ward, a

recently qualified military police officer, agreed with Fann that the program also prepared her for what to expect.

“During our RSP drill weekends, we did a lot of different training, so by the time I got to basic training, I had done those things three or four times, where others had never even seen it before,” said Ward.

Both Ward and Fann were completing their last drill of the RSP

during the Best Warrior Challenge training event, and their presence did not go unnoticed.

“Getting Soldiers like Ward and Fann involved in training is invaluable for the new Soldiers,” said Carson. “When they see their peers fresh out of basic training and advanced individual training, they can mentally picture themselves graduating too.”

One team; one fight

Elements come together for live fire training

by **Bethany Brown**
Staff Writer

FORT RUCKER, Ala. - In order for military operations to be successful, each soldier must be confident in their abilities and be able to perform their job competently. Hands-on, simulation training scenarios are conducted to ensure that military members have the needed confidence and competence to know how and when to do their job. Tasks performed by Soldiers on the battlefield require trust, competence and teamwork.

The 117th Field Artillery Battalion along with Soldiers of the 151st Aviation Regiment of the Alabama Army National Guard performed a live fire training exercise in early May at Fort Rucker.

Elements from the 117th consisting of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery of Andalusia, Combat Support of Troy, Alpha Battery of Phenix City, and Bravo Battery of Greenville worked together with members from the aviation regiment in a training exercise that was an intricate display of competent teamwork at its best.

"HHB controls all of the fire missions," said Capt. Tobey Seay, the battalion fire direction officer of the 117th Headquarters and Headquarters Battery. "Forward troops call the location of enemies or their equipment in to the Headquarters Battery in order for the process to begin."

Once a location is called in, HHB works hand-in-hand with aviation, if available, to confirm the location and then give a go-ahead to the artillery batteries.

Training for the Alpha and Bravo Batteries of the 117th consisted of firing the 155mm howitzer cannons. Fir-

ing artillery pieces is not a one-man task and good communication and teamwork are essential to complete the task and ensure the safety of everyone involved.

"For training missions that consist of firing live rounds, preparation is started two to four months in advance," said Staff Sgt. James McGough, the fire direction section chief for Bravo Battery. "Training like this is good for every unit involved, because, not only does it give an opportunity to fire live rounds, but it greatly improves morale," said Seay.

McGough further confirmed the morale boost by pointing to the Soldiers on the range standing by the cannons and stated, "Everybody is happy and ready to go. This is a major morale boost."

"Soldiers realize the importance of their job when training exercises are conducted and it is a major morale booster," said Capt. Billy Davis, the company commander for Forward Support. "The FSC has a very important job, because we handle the distribution of ammunition, maintenance, fuel and food for the other units."

"FSC is the lifeblood of the mission," said Spc. Willie Moore, a supply



Bethany Brown/photo

Soldiers of Bravo Battery of 117th Field Artillery Battalion run a dry fire drill with a 155mm howitzer cannon. The battery participated in a battalion live fire training exercise with Soldiers of the 151st Aviation Regiment providing air support. The training exercise gave an opportunity to train using the artillery pieces while increasing morale and confidence among the Soldiers of the battery.

specialist of FSC. "If the other units need anything, we go out there and take care of it."

First Sergeant Ronnie Joiner of FSC further elaborated that the purpose of military training is to teach Soldiers how to fight and survive, and being able to get out and do actual training helps to do just that.