

Alabama Guardsman

Vol. V 2010

A publication for the citizen-Soldiers & Airmen of Alabama



In this issue:

Alabama Guard Warrant Officer sets the bar high
Pg.2

Snap Shots; Highlights in the Alabama National Guard
Pg. 4-5

The Adjutant General and State Command Sgt. Maj.
Pg.3

*Budding relationships form out of Partnership
for Peace Program* Pg. 6

Warrant Officer sets the bar high in everything she does

by Staff Sgt. Katrina Timmons
Staff Writer

Alabama Army National Guard Warrant Officer Mickey Dickerson continues to outshine the competition. A recent graduate from Signal Systems Support Technician Warrant Officer Basic Course, Dickerson set the standards for all to meet, being named the distinguished honor graduate for her class.

She was also named the Distinguished Honor Graduate and Leadership Award recipient for her Warrant Officer Candidate School. Her other achievements and awards include the German Army Troop Duty Proficiency Badge (Gold), the Commandant's Award for Physical Fitness, one Meritorious Serve Medal, six Army Commendation Medals and six Army Achievement Medals.

According to the state chief warrant officer, Chief Warrant Officer 5 Thomas Gilbert, Dickerson personifies what the warrant officer corps is all about. "Her accomplishments are of no surprise," said Gilbert. "She was an outstanding noncommissioned



Contributed/photo

Warrant Officer Mickey Dickerson

officer who was an expert in her field and was highly recommended to continue her career as a warrant officer."

Dickerson said the driving force behind her success was simple tenacity and the will to succeed. "I believe that nothing is worth doing if you are not going to give the most of yourself," remarked Dickerson about her military accomplishments. "Anything less than that is just selling yourself short."

Dickerson said she made the decision to become a warrant officer while serving in Iraq. "I received a WO1 rank (insignia) from a warrant officer that I

worked with," reminisced Dickerson. "I carried that rank with me from then on." With the encouragement of her leaders in the 31st Chemical Brigade, Dickerson accepted the challenge and enrolled in Warrant Officer Candidate School.

The rewards of becoming a warrant officer far outweighed the challenges for Dickerson. "Warrant officers are, by definition, technical experts, combat leaders, trainers and advisors. I see the warrant officer as a person who is trusted by the officer corps to make technical recommendations to
(Please see *Warrant Officer*, page 7)

Alabama Guardsman

The Alabama Guardsman is published by the 131st Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, Alabama Army National Guard. Submissions are encouraged and should be e-mailed to the 131st MPAD, int-paosal@ng.army.mil, (334) 213-7572. The views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of Defense, the Department of the Army, the National Guard Bureau or the Alabama National Guard. This publication is electronically published monthly on the Alabama National Guard website.

Adjutant General.....Maj. Gen. Abner Blalock
Public Affairs Officer.....Lt. Col. Cynthia Bachus
131st MPAD Commander.....Maj. Anthony Laier
Senior Editor.....Sgt. 1st Class. Jamie Brown
Staff Writer.....Staff Sgt. Katrina Timmons

On the Cover

Members of the 20th Special Forces Group execute a lake jump over Lake Guntersville on Sept. 17. The unit jumps annually to maintain airborne proficiency (photos by Cynthia Bachus).

Adjutant General

FY 11 another significant year for Alabama Guard



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

We mark the beginning of FY11 with significant uncertainties at the National level. Congress has yet to pass the FY11 Authorization and Appropriation bills; political stability in Iraq

and Afghanistan continues to improve in spite of peaks and valleys on an almost daily basis; key Senior leadership positions within the Department of Defense Agencies will transition to new personnel. In spite of these uncer-

tainties, FY11 will be another significant year for your National Guard!

We will prepare almost 1500 soldiers for deployment. We will also deliver to the Nation a CBRNE Enhanced Response Force Package (CERF-P) force of 141 ARNG Soldiers and 51 ANG Airmen by the end of FY11. This force will be ready to respond to a CBRNE event within the Continental United States within 6 hours of an event, and deliver life-saving extraction, decontamination and medical care to affected citizens. This joint force will be built around the 145th Chemical Battalion and will involve Soldiers and Airmen from 690 CM Co, 440th CM Co, 187 Fighter Wing Medical

Group, 117 Air Refueling Wing Medical Group and the 117 ARW Services Flight. Personnel will also be trained and available from ARNG Medical Companies to augment ANG Medical capabilities. During FY11, we will build CERF-P specific training facilities at Fort McClellan. We will also continue to train and build additional extraction, decontamination, medical and CBRNE C2 capabilities within Engineer, Medical, MP and C2 HQ from the Alabama Army National Guard as we expand the CBRNE Enterprise training capabilities with the Center for Domestic Preparedness at Fort McClellan. Your organization will continue its focus on **(Please see *FY 11*, page 7)**

State Command Sergeant Major

Fall is a time of opportunity for safety and personal growth



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

As fall approaches the days get shorter and thankfully the weather cools, schools start and our favorite football teams take the field. I want to remind everyone to be safe and watch out for each other, especially our children during

peak movement times around our schools.

October is significant in two ways for me; it marks the start of Fire Prevention Month and the start of a new season for Federal Tuition Assistance. Fire Prevention month has its roots in the Great Chicago Fire

that started on October 9, 1871 which caused devastation to the City of Chicago and spurred many new innovations in fire protection and prevention. Take a few moments to walk through your home and correct any fire hazards you may notice, develop an escape plan with your family and practice it! Your local fire department can provide you with simple, common sense instructions and resources for planning. Preventing fires is the best medicine against loss of property or precious lives.

The new season for Federal Tuition Assistance begins each October. As a member of the National Guard, you may be entitled to up to \$4500 for qualified education programs. This is an excellent program that will help you start or finish a degree program that qualifies. For further information call the State Education Office

at 334-213-7580.

Besides tuition assistance, there may be many other educational programs that you may be entitled to as well. Your service in the National Guard has probably earned you credits toward a degree that may just be around the corner. Call the Education Office. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain from just a little effort.

With the shrinking daylight hours, falling temperatures and leaves sometimes our focus and motivation wanes as well. I want each of you to stay focused on safety and motivated to continue to challenge yourselves physically and mentally. We need you strong and prepared to meet all the challenges that lay ahead. Bayonet 7 out.

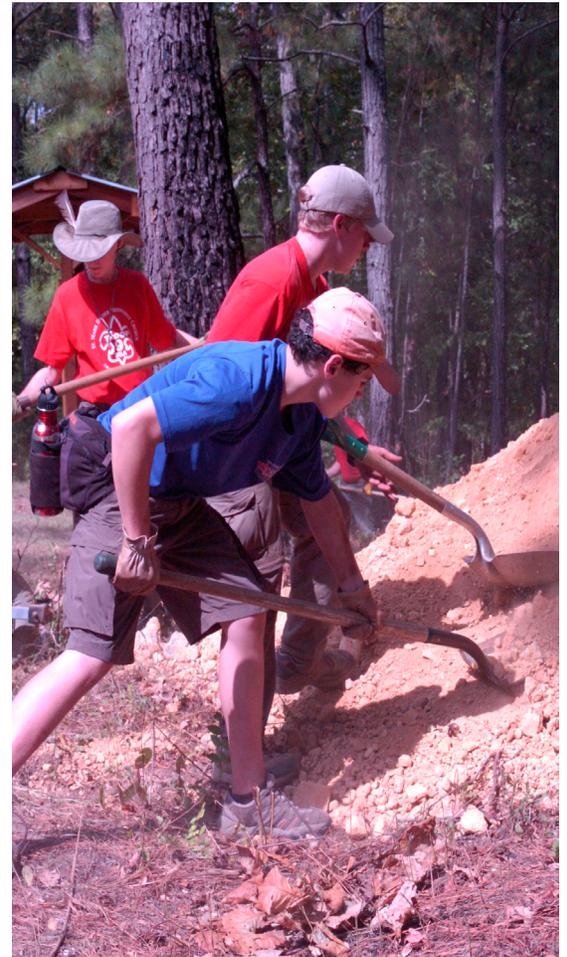
Snap Shots

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



Contributed/photo

Dan Williams, mayor of Athens, offers the key to the city to the 203rd Military Police Battalion. The 203rd returned home this summer after completing their mission of training Iraqi police officers.



Jamie Brown/photo

Boy Scouts from Troop 9 out of Anniston scoop up dirt at Willet Springs on Pelham Range September 25. The Scouts, with volunteers from the Girl Scouts and the Alabama Army National Guard Environmental Program Office, worked on creating a venue for environmental education. The activities were in conjunction with National Public Lands Day.



Contributed/photo

Mobile medical wagons sit at Fort McClellan during the 167th Infantry's medical readiness event on September 17. The event included Immunizations, Periodic Health Assessments, Dental Exams, HIV/DNA testing, more than 40 screenings (EKG & Labs), and vision screenings. As an added part to this event, full dental treatment services were provided to those soldiers who were previously identified or identified at the event as dental class three.

Soldiers with Company B, 1st Battalion, 169th Aviation Regiment from Birmingham are welcomed home by friends and family September 3. The Soldiers were deployed for Operation Enduring Freedom to Afghanistan for one year. During their tour, the unit conducted over 6,856 flight hours, transported 78,210 passengers, and 7,084 short tons of equipment and cargo while completing over 2,207 combat aviation missions under the most extreme conditions on earth.



Sheila Holifield/photo



Sgt. Azure Salter from Joint Task Force South presents awards to Girl Scouts from Troop 8046 of the Girl Scouts of South Alabama Council on September 9. The girls gathered hygiene supplies from local businesses and filled more than 100 "comfort bags" for the Soldiers assigned to Deepwater Horizon. They also gathered donations of Girl Scout Cookies for the Soldiers. Their troop leader, Mrs. Cindy Collette, created stained glass crosses and had her fellow church members write notes of encouragement to include with the crosses. A Soldier made all the girls paracord bracelets, and a plaque was made from Joint Task Force South in recognition of their volunteerism. The girls were presented with Minutemen Statues for volunteer work and patches from the 226th

Contributed/photo

Budding Relationships form out of State Partnership Program

by Spc. Bethany Brown
131st MPAD

With the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989, Eastern European countries wanted to establish better relationships with the United States. Therefore, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization formed the State Partnership Program where each state's National Guard was paired with different former Eastern Bloc nation. These partnerships were formed not only with the intent of forming better relations, but to serve as a source of leadership and guidance.

In August, five Alabama National Guard members and two civilians visited Romania to give presentations regarding current needs and events that presently affect the country.

"The presentation was given to military and medical professionals about the stresses of terrorism and natural disasters," said Col. John McGuinness, the Alabama National Guard state surgeon.

McGuinness stated that during his visit, he realized there were some commonalities between the state of Alabama and Romania. "They are limited on resources in regards to the military and have the same problems with post-traumatic stress disorder and the transition of returning to civilian life."

Maj. Donald McArthur, the Aero-medical physician as-



Contributed/photo

Lt. Col. Shannon Hancock, Col. Robert Hicks, Lt. Col. Aurelian Moraru (Ministry of National Defense Medical Directorate-Romania) and Col. John McGuinness conduct briefings on disaster and terrorism response utilizing medical, psychological and spiritual elements.

sistant with Det. 5 (Med Det) STARC, stated that the problems the Romanians are experiencing are similar to the problems here in the United States.

"There is a lot to be said about the Romanian's style," said McArthur. "Their military has a psychologist in every battalion and they don't have nearly as many chaplains like we have in our military."

Before the fall of the Soviet Union, religion was a concept that was controlled and rarely discussed in public, said Col. Robert Hicks, Alabama Air National Guard chaplain.

The Romanian chaplain's role within the military has evolved and is pushing to become more involved, said Hicks. He added that Romania

knows where they are trying to go in the aspect of what the chaplain's role should be and more aggressive training has been proposed.

Religion has not been the only aspect affected since becoming an independent country, the change between the older and younger generation is also drastic, said Hicks. "You definitely see what freedom does to people by looking at the differences between the age groups." Additionally, said Hicks, freedom shows in their eyes and attitudes – you see it gives them hope, education, and dreams.

"I am definitely proud to be an American, an officer, and in the Army," said McArthur. "And it is interesting to see that (Please see *Partnership*, page 7)

(Warrant Officer continued from page 2)

accomplish the mission and successfully meet the commander's intent.

They can also be excellent mentors and trainers for enlisted personnel." Dickerson said the experience has provided her with a new focus and a new level of excitement for her military career.

Dickerson's passion and dedication drive her to succeed in her civilian life as well. To date she is two classes from completing her bachelor's in information systems with hopes of acquiring a masters in business administration within the

(FY 11 continued from page 3)

improvement in all areas as we sustain 100% strength while filling Officer and Warrant Officer shortages, improve DMOSQ to 95%, and achieve 90% Fully Medically Ready for Deployment. We will become more efficient and effective in the use of diminishing resources provided by DOD and Congress. We will stop doing the things that do not support building a Quality Force, and reinforce those areas that can

next four years.

"She exemplifies excellence in all that she does as attested by her accomplishments," said Gilbert. "She always meets challenges positively and head on."

Dickerson has many influencers in her life. "I have nine nieces and nephews who are very important to me. I work hard to set the example for them and others. I want them to believe that anything is possible if you just work hard and give it your best."

But her strongest influencers

have been her parents. "They are the reason I originally joined the military. They encouraged me to take this path to have options for education and training," said Dickerson. "They have always been supportive of my career, my successes and my failures."

According to Gilbert, Dickerson is, without question, a Soldier with unlimited potential. "She is a great ambassador for the Alabama National Guard and the warrant officer corps," said Gilbert.

(Partnership continued from page 6)

their problems are the same as they are here such as a receding economy and money issues."

Hicks added, "They are hopeful about their future, and are ahead of a lot of other European countries. They know where they are going; it is just going to take time to take those steps to actually get there. They are on the right track, though."

McGuinness added, "I am impressed with the Romanians

because they are getting a lot more prosperous, which is even more noticeable since my last visit which was 14 months ago. Alabama does have a lot to offer to Romania in terms of assistance, though."

When dealing with PTSD, not only is stress management important but so is teaching resiliency, said McArthur, who gave a presentation on stress management. It is being found that teaching resiliency and the ability to cope is far more effective when trau-

We have always succeeded because of the efforts of each Soldier and Airman working to achieve at the individual level. I am confident we will meet or exceed our expectations for this year because of you. I look forward to this difficult year with optimism and anticipation because you have never failed in War or in Peace. Proud to Serve!

matic events happen instead of focusing on it after the fact.

Many friendships have been formed between the Romanians and Alabama Guard members since these visits have begun. Not only do the Romanian's benefit from the partnership through discussing and learning how to deal with pressing matters such as natural disasters, but Alabama benefits through learning about a different culture and are able to grow professionally and personally.