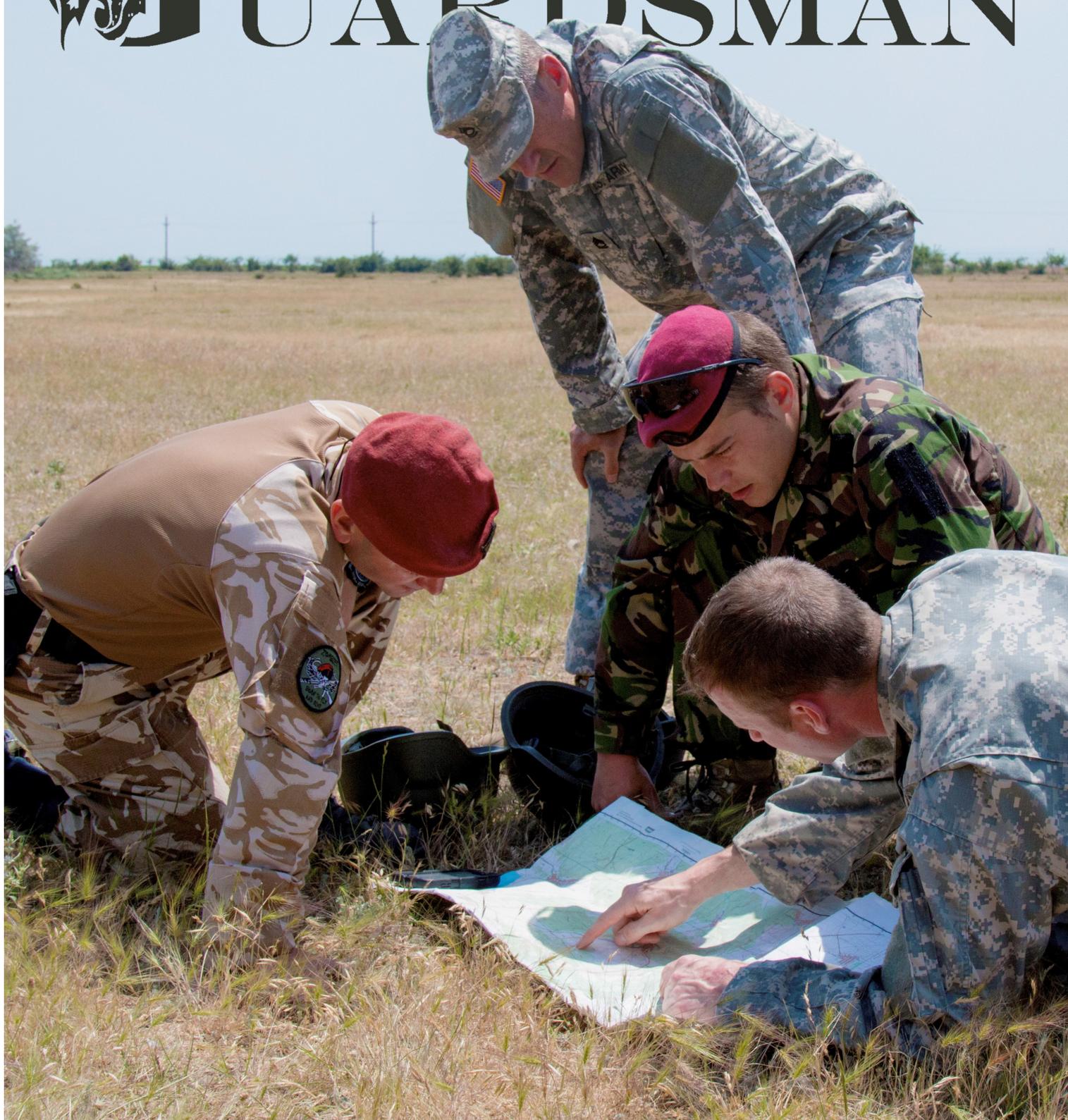


# ALABAMA GUARDSMAN



## What's Inside

- 3 **Adjutant General & State Command Sergeant Major**  
*The new year brings new challenges and opportunities & Dimensions of strength: Focusing on the individual service member.*
- 4 *State Partnership Program serves as a foundation of strength*
- 5-6 **SnapShots**  
*Highlights from around the Alabama Guard*
- 7 **Retirements**



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### On The Cover

*Members of the 528th Light Reconnaissance Battalion of the Romanian Land Force and the 1st Squadron, 131st Cavalry, Alabama Army National Guard, plan a joint area reconnaissance mission during Exercise Red Dragon June 13, 2015, Babadag, Romania. Red Dragon is a training exercise conducted between the 131st Cavalry, Alabama Army National Guard and the 528th Light Reconnaissance Battalion, Romanian Land Force, in an effort to build stronger ties between American and Romanian forces. Please see the story about the partnership between Alabama and Romania on page 4 (Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Christopher Shanley).*

## Adjutant General

# The new year brings new challenges and opportunities



**Maj. Gen.  
Perry Smith**

I can hardly believe it's already 2016. It seems every year brings more challenges and difficulties, providing more rewarding opportunities resulting in more accomplishments.

This year we enhanced our long

standing partnership with Romania and sent more than 1,000 Soldiers and Airmen to train with their Romanian counterparts. This partnership continues to be a great asset to our organization. In addition, it provides great training value; service member and leader development; and joint and combined experience.

We also grew in Army authorized end strength this year, which is a challenge and an opportunity. It's a challenge, because we are hundreds of Soldiers short of our authorized

amount. It is an opportunity, because we are adding force structure that will help continue to position us as a leader among National Guard organizations. The vacancies we have now will create opportunities for some to reclassify into other specialties and will generate plenty of openings for us to recruit our friends, neighbors and coworkers.

That is exactly what we need to be doing – recruiting for the Alabama National Guard. If you're like me, the Guard has changed your life for the **(Please see 2016, page 7)**

## State Command Sergeant Major

# Dimensions of strength: Focusing on the individual service member



**Command  
Sgt. Maj.  
Eddie Pike**

Strength Management is a frequently used term throughout the Army Regulation 600-8, focusing on personnel accounting and strength reporting. The purpose of strength

management is to retain quality Soldiers and maintain proper strength levels throughout all components of the total Army force. There are different types of "personal" strength management that Soldiers should never lose sight of, which are vitally important to the overall strength of the individual Soldier and the military's success.

The AR 350-53 discusses the five areas of strength, focusing on the

physical, emotional, social, spiritual and family dimensions. The Army has an ongoing focus on the comprehensive readiness of each individual Soldier and continues to develop the Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness program. The purpose of individual strength management is to ensure that Soldiers are physically healthy and psychologically strong, enabling them to thrive militarily and able to meet a variety of operational demands.

The physical dimension encompasses excelling in physical activity, including fitness, endurance, strength conditioning, healthy body composition and nutrition. The physical dimension also includes the Office of the Surgeon General Performance Triad initiative of sleep, activity and nutrition to improve personal and unit performance, resilience and readiness.

Soldiers must also focus on the

emotional dimension, approaching life's challenges in optimistic and positive ways by demonstrating stamina, self-control and professionalism. The challenges we face can potentially erode healthy emotions, but maintaining positive control is critical to resilience and psychological health. There are also social, spiritual and family dimensions where Soldiers should develop, maintain and value healthy friendships, relationships and professional connections with colleagues.

Throughout the Alabama National Guard, we must collectively focus on these very important strengths, and incorporate them during professional development opportunities. While we are one of the strongest and largest National Guards in the United States, our strength lies within the total fitness of our individual Soldiers and Airmen.

## State Partnership Program serves as a foundation of strength

by SSG Christopher Davis  
Staff Writer

Citizen-Soldiers from the Alabama National Guard have shared their knowledge and skills with Romania Defense Forces through joint-force exercises and missions over the last 22 years.

Alabama and Romania are part of the National Guard's State Partnership Program (SPP) that was instituted in 1993 after the fall of the Soviet Union. Its ongoing mission is part of the Department of Defense and National Guard Bureau to support nations around the world with a one-on-one initiative.

"Each of the activities we performed together was an opportunity for both the Romanian and American Soldiers to develop new skills, learning from each other," said Lt. Gen. Nicolae-Ionel Ciuca, Chief of General Staff of Romanian Armed Forces.

"Everyone knows that if one can teach something to someone else, one can do it better oneself," said Maj. Gen. Perry Smith, the Adjutant General of the Alabama National Guard. "We have mutually used this philosophy throughout our partnership relations with Romania."

The first joint-mission involving Alabama Guardsmen and Romanian Soldiers was a humanitarian effort at an orphanage in Constanta, Romania. The two groups repaired damaged buildings and sewer lines, improving the support base for the children.

Since this first effort in the mid-1990s, the Alabama-Romania partnership has encouraged other groups to provide help and support for the orphanages and the children they support.

"Working together gives them



Christopher Shanley/photo

*Members of the 528th Light Reconnaissance Battalion of the Romanian Land Force and the 1st Squadron, 131st Cavalry, Alabama Army National Guard, conduct a joint area reconnaissance mission during Exercise Red Dragon June 15, 2015, Babadag, Romania. Red Dragon is a training exercise conducted between the 131st Cavalry, Alabama Army National Guard and the 528th Light Reconnaissance Battalion, Romanian Land Force, in an effort to build stronger ties between American and Romanian forces.*

high satisfaction because these programs are an opportunity for the Romanian and American Soldiers who have not participated in missions in the operation theatres to work in an international environment where they need skills that cannot be developed while working with their own fellows," said Ciuca.

There has been more than 200 events, missions and exercises since the beginning of the SPP between Alabama and Romania. Events included state visits, training exercises and subject matter expert exchanges, where both militaries share ideas and concepts that amplify their capabilities for future combat operations.

"Starting this year, we conducted in Romania live exercises, for reconnaissance units, engineer troops and

air forces in order to increase the interoperability of our troops," said Ciuca. "The SPP, a model of partnership itself, is coordinated and mentored by skillful leaders and applied by officers."

Alabama National Guard units traveled to Romania and conducted NATO training exercises recently as part of Operation Atlantic Resolve 2015 throughout Eastern Europe.

The Alabama National Guard is a crucial part of the DOD's European Reassurance Initiative with American Soldiers working with their state partners as a sign of solidarity between American and European allies.

"The implementation of the US-European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) projects represents a high priority (Please see PARTNERSHIP, page 8)

# Snap Shots

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



Johnathan Wilson/photo

**FLORENE, Alabama - Command Sgt. Maj. John Edward Randau passes the NCO Sword to Command Sgt. Maj. Jay Stallings during the 115th Expeditionary Signal Battalion's change of responsibility ceremony here Jan. 10, 2016.**



David Arnold/photo

**MONTGOMERY, Alabama - Brig. Gen. Danny Speigner leads Alabama National Guard Soldiers in a reenlistment ceremony at Joint Force Headquarters here Jan. 9, 2016. Thirty-eight Soldiers extended their service at the Operation Crossroads event. The purpose of Operation Crossroads is to provide transition assistance to Soldiers leaving the Alabama National Guard, while simultaneously making an effort to retain quality Soldiers.**



Johnathan Wilson/photo

**MONTGOMERY, Alabama - Capt. Richard Rogers is presented the Meritorious Service Medal here Jan. 19, 2016, for distinguished and faithful service as the executive officer and aide-de-camp to Maj. Gen. Perry G. Smith, the adjutant general. Rogers served as the aide-de-camp from 2013-2015.**



William Frye/photo

**GARDENDALE, Alabama** - Elizabeth Phisher, administrative support with the Alabama Department of Education Career and Technical Education; Sean Stevens, education administrator with the Office of Counseling and Guidance; and Maj. Ira Phillips, executive officer, 22nd Recruiting and Retention Battalion, Alabama National Guard, pose at the 11th Annual Alabama Career Development Conference at the South campus Gardendale First Baptist Church here Jan. 28, 2016. The Alabama National Guard partnered with the Alabama State Department of Education, Career and Technical Training to help inform educators about the career opportunities and training available in the Alabama National Guard.



Johnathan Wilson/photo

**MONTGOMERY, Alabama** - State Command Sgt. Maj. Eddie W. Pike presents a certificate of excellence to Chief Master Sgt. Lindsey McCall upon his retirement at Dannelly Field Jan. 9, 2016. McCall served as the sixth command chief of the 187th Fighter Wing (Alabama Air National Guard).



Contributed/photo

**PELHAM RANGE, Alabama** - A participant poses with a catch at the Fort McClellan Army National Guard Training Center's annual "Hunt for Individuals with Physical Disabilities" here Jan. 13, 2016. The Alabama Army National Guard partnered with the Alabama Department of Conservation to host this hunt as part of the Department's Hunters with Physical Disabilities Hunting Trail. There were 18 participants from across Alabama. Participants arrived on Pelham Range and were escorted by Game Management Office (GMO) staff members to various locations on the range. The participants also shared lunch with Soldiers and civilian staff members of the Alabama Army National Guard. This year's event was successful, having seven deer harvested to include mature bucks. All participants had encounters with wildlife and enjoyed their opportunity to observe the land stewardship of the Alabama Army National Guard. Many of the participants return annually and eagerly look forward to this special event.

## Congratulations to the following retiring Alabama Guardsmen:

O4	Beach, Gurney A. III	Joint Forces Headquarters
CW4	Brown, Rhonda J.	135th Sustainment Command
E5	Geahr, Tracy E.	Co. C 115th ESB
E6	Heath, Carlos D.	166th Engineer Co. (Det.1)
E7	Holcomb, Korby L.	GSB Medical Co. (ABN)
E5	Marbury, James C.	1208 Quartermaster Co.
E6	McClendon, Woodrow T.	1670 Transportation Co.
E6	Oliver, Angela T.	HQ 2101 Transportation Co. (Det. 1&2)
E5	Toland, Daniel C.	1208 Quartermaster Co.
E5	Wallace, Nathaniel P.	FSC 877th Engineer Battalion
E6	Wallace, Van A.	HHC 20th SFG GSB (ABN)
E7	Pyant, Lamar R.	HHD 145th Chemical Battalion
E6	Vance, Larry D.	166th Engineer Co. (Det. 1)

*Editors note: The names of retired Alabama Guardsmen are provided by MACOMs*

*(2016 continued from page 3)*

better - with paid job training, money for continuing education, inexpensive and comprehensive healthcare coverage, low-cost life insurance, and excellent retirement benefits. People should be beating down our door to get in. I believe people don't know who we are and what we offer. Telling people about the Guard isn't just the job of the recruiters and public affairs officers in the state - it's your job and mine. After all, we are part of this organi-

zation as well, and I hope that we all want it to succeed and flourish.

In order to keep the Alabama National Guard a leader among the states and territories, we must work hard to maintain strength. In fiscal year 2015, we had the fifth largest Army Guard authorized end strength in the country; yet, according to the 2010 Census, we are the 23rd largest state. You can do the math - we have to recruit more people per capita than most

other states. That's just what we've done year after year, and I need your help to make sure we keep doing that.

Let's meet the challenges and opportunities that 2016 will present and face them with determination, planning, and our Army and Air Force values. We can continue to be key to our state's success. Thank you for all you do and I wish everyone a happy new year. Lead from the front!

## 8 Alabama Guardsman

*(Partnership continued from page 4)*

projects represents a high priority for the Romanian side, and we are extremely grateful to continue to support this process,” said Ciuca. “The ERI inventory in Romania currently includes 93 different infrastructure projects listed in the Defense Cooperation Agreement.”

Guardsmen from the 1-131st Cavalry participated with Romanian Soldiers from the 528th Reconnaissance Battalion in Operation Red Dragon last summer, a joint exercise testing combat readiness and interoperability between personnel from the Army, Navy and Air Force.

Romanian and Alabama Soldiers have started to expand the infrastructure to outlying bases in Romania to

better facilitate training as a means to improve the Romanian Armed Forces overall capabilities in preparing troops for future deployments.

Engineers from various Romanian engineer units and the 877th Engineer Battalion improved range operations for the Cincu Training Center in Cincu, Romania, as part of Operation Resolute Castle.

“The Russian resurgence would be a lot more intimidating to Romania if the partnership with the Alabama National Guard had not been so strong,” said Smith. “Romania stands defiantly and confidently against the Russian threat because of the rapport that has been established through our partnership.”

There are multiple training

and mission events scheduled for 2016 between Alabama and Romania. The 877th Engineer Battalion will return to Cincu Training Center to further the weapons ranges on the site. The 187th Fighter Wing has and will continue to provide advice in conducting operations as an F-16 fighter wing, as the Romanian Air Force will have their first F-16 fighter squadron by 2017. “The State Partnership Program is the most valuable and best foreign relations tool our nation has ever had as evidenced by the very successful partnership relationship between Romania and the Alabama National Guard,” said Smith.



*Capt. Jason Bennett promotes Francis Bellush to the rank of Specialist at the deployment ceremony of the 129th Area Support Medical Company at Fort I. Judson Snead Armory in Centerville, Ala. on Jan. 9, 2016. The 129th is deploying 19 Alabama National Guard Soldiers to Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (Photo by Army Sgt. William Frye.)*