

ALABAMA GUARDSMAN



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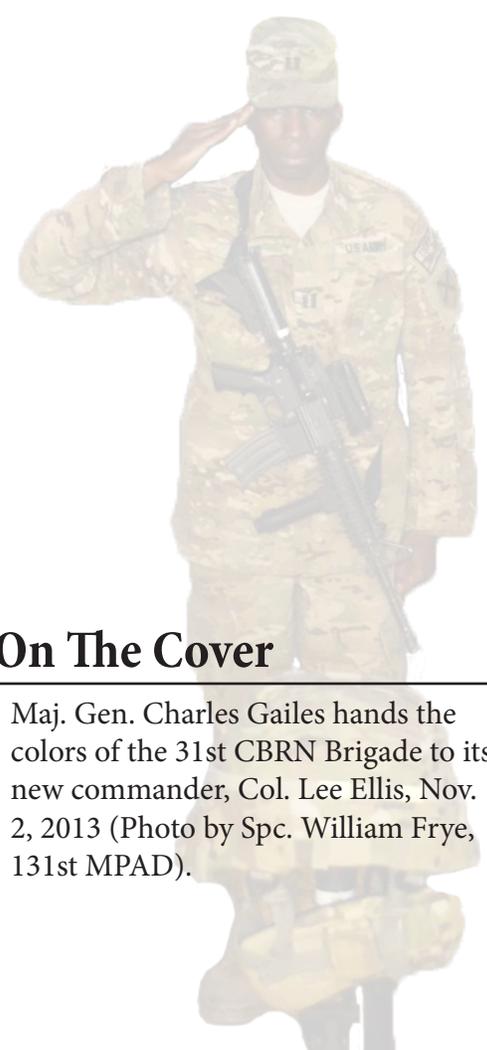
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On The Cover

Maj. Gen. Charles Gailles hands the colors of the 31st CBRN Brigade to its new commander, Col. Lee Ellis, Nov. 2, 2013 (Photo by Spc. William Frye, 131st MPAD).

Adjutant General

Guardsmen are integral part of nation's armed forces



**Maj. Gen.
Perry Smith**

Fiscal year 2014 started off on a difficult note without adequate funding and a partial government shutdown, forcing us to cancel drill for October. This caused each Soldier and Airman in the Alabama

National Guard to miss out on valuable training that is designed to ensure the Alabama National Guard is able to respond to the call of the governor or president when needed. We have been able to reschedule this drill period, but the disruption to training and to Guardsmen and their families

provided additional difficult tasks and decisions for everyone.

In the midst of this turmoil, as active duty Soldiers and Airmen continued to train and get paid, some believe that lawmakers or policy makers are placing a higher importance on active duty troops over National Guard and other reserve troops. What I will say to you is not to let politics and bureaucracy determine your worth.

You – the Guardsman, the militiaman, the Citizen Soldier or Airman – are the original American fighting force whose roots reach to at least 1636 in this country and whose concept reaches thousands of years before that in history. You are the force mentioned in the U.S. Constitution. You are the force who is called upon to help your communities in times of need and whose heroics constantly help your

fellow citizens recover from floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, winter storms, wildfires and other disasters.

And though it won't replace valuable training and certainly won't replace the money lost from missed training, I want you to know that I see your worth as the most valuable military force in our nation. And I believe that you – the Soldiers, Airmen, civilians and families of the Alabama National Guard – are exceptional people who are integral to this state and to this nation's Armed Forces.

So, thank you for being you. Thank you for making this organization better each day. I hope that you will not allow the recent troubles in our government deter you from your commitment to this nation and the values that make it great. Lead from the front!

State Command Sergeant Major

Thanksgiving brings many reasons to be grateful



**Command Sgt.
Maj.
Eddie Pike**

Every year around Thanksgiving, I like to take time to reflect on the things in my life for which I am thankful. I find that this helps me keep things in proper perspective

and it also helps me prioritize what I want to focus on in my life and my work.

These are some of the things I am thankful for: I am thankful for

my faith. I am thankful for my family and friends. I am thankful for this great country in which we live. I am thankful for the supreme honor I have in serving as the state command sergeant major for the Alabama National Guard and working with some of the finest Soldiers and Airmen in the military. It is a privilege that I cherish every day and don't take for granted. I am thankful for our Guardsmen who have come home safely from deployment recently and I am thankful for those Guardsmen who are still deployed, for securing our safety and freedom back here at home. I am thankful

for each and every one of you. I am thankful for your sacrifices, your enthusiasm and ingenuity and everything each and every one of you do to make and keep the Alabama National Guard strong.

I encourage each of you to take some time over the Thanksgiving holiday to take some time to think about the things for which you are thankful. I hope thinking about these things will inspire and reinvigorate you. As always, it is an honor to serve with each and every one of you. I wish each of you the best during this Thanksgiving holiday.

Snapshots

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



Contributed/photo

Sergeant First Class Billy J. Hill (right) and Sergeant Andrew P. Elosge of B Company, Group Support Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne) show fifth grade students at Vincent Elementary School the proper way to raise the American and Alabama State flags every morning; as well as retreat every evening. The two Guardsmen visited the school on October 1.



Contributed/photo

Auburn Army ROTC cadets meet with Senator Tom Whatley and The Adjutant General for Alabama, Maj. Gen. Perry Smith. The two presented the War Eagle Battalion with a \$1500 check from the Alabama State Senate which will go towards the designated needs of the program. “Keep up the good work,” Smith told the cadets. Whatley and Smith are both alumni of the Auburn ROTC program and they both said they were excited to be back “home”.



Contributed/photo

Staff Sgt. Barbara Flores and Sgt. Randi Biggs from Team 7 of the 22nd Recruiting and Retention Battalion are joined by Command Sgt. Maj. Eddie Pike, the state command sergeant major at their recent promotion ceremony. Flores was also awarded her master recruiting badge at the ceremony.



Contributed/photo

Soldiers of the 115th Expeditionary Signal Battalion stand proudly for a photo on the Boardwalk at Kandahar Air Field following the 115th ESB Cancer Awareness 5k October 5, 2012. The 115th ESB was deployed throughout Afghanistan from 6 December 2011 – 18 October 2012. October 5, 2012 the Battalion sponsored a 5k run to honor friends and family of the deployed Soldiers who have been affected by the many forms of cancer. Soldiers of the 115th raised money by volunteering their off time to sell T-shirts and accept donations at the famous “Kandahar Boardwalk” in August and September 2012 prior to re-deployment. The 115th donated \$4,367.53 to the Florence, Alabama Relay for Life chapter of the American Cancer Society on behalf of the Soldiers of the 115th ESB and the Alabama Army National Guard.



Christopher Davis/photo

The 231st Military Police Battalion began receiving new M-1117 “Guardian” Armored Security Vehicles in 2012. They conducted training on the new vehicles on Pelham Range November 16, 2013.



Contributed/photo

31st honors the past and looks to the future at ceremony

by Sgt. Eric Roberts
Public Affairs Office

FORT McCLELLAN, Ala. - Brig. Gen. David R. Brown relinquished command of the 31st Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Brigade, headquartered in Tuscaloosa, to Col. Lee M. Ellis in a ceremony at the Alabama National Guard Fort McClellan Army National Guard Training Center Saturday, Nov. 2, 2013.

Brown noted his success was not of his accord but of his Soldiers and officers during his run as commander that began in 2011.

"Brig. Gen. Brown did a great job, but Col. Ellis will build upon what Brown has done and continue to achieve great things," said Lt. Col. Brian Naugher, deputy brigade commander.

"It is bittersweet to leave



William Frye/photo



William Frye/photo

FORT McCLELLAN, Ala. - Col. Lee Ellis addresses the Soldiers of his new unit, Nov. 2, 2013 at a change of command ceremony for the 31st Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Brigade.

the greatest and most successful brigade in our state," said Brown.

"Gen. Brown, you have accomplished a lot here, you have been extremely successful," said Maj. Gen Charles Gales, Task Force 51 Commander, who acted as reviewing general for the ceremony. "Col. Ellis is a distinguished leader and well respected."

"I stand here truly humbled and honored as your commander," Ellis said.

Ellis challenged his new soldiers to maintain their personal readiness.

"We could have a mission at any moment – ensure your readiness, and consider your Army Values," Ellis added.

In a unit that Ellis noted for its accomplishments - domestic and abroad - he reminded the soldiers, "The Strength of the Army is the strength of the Soldiers."

"I am all yours - I am 100 percent here for you," added





Alabama's first female general officer retires

After more than 32 years as an Army officer in the Alabama National Guard, Maj. Gen. Sheryl E. Gordon retired Sept. 27, 2013. Gordon's latest assignment was the assistant adjutant general, a primary advisor to the Alabama Guard's top officer.

"Maj. Gen. Gordon has excelled as an officer in the United States Army," said Maj. Gen. Perry G. Smith, the Alabama National Guard's adjutant general. "She is the first female general officer in the Alabama National Guard and is one of only two female major generals in all of the 358,000 Soldiers in the Army National Guard. Her real mark on the National Guard will be the impact she has had on young Soldiers throughout her career with her exceptional leadership and mentorship. She will be greatly missed and we all wish her the best in her retirement."

Brenda Thomas/photo

Employment News

Programs are available to veterans looking for employment

by Lt. Col. Jamie Benton
Employment Assistance Coordinator

If you are unemployed, you should take advantage of the many state and privately funded programs available to assist veterans and service members looking for employment.

To get started, you should register at one or all of these sites:

Register at the National Guard Employment Network Portal (NGEN) at <http://www.mscen.org/NationalGuard/>. The NGEN mission is to provide a network for service members and their families to connect directly with employment resources, service providers and employers.

Register at Hero to Hired (H2H) at www.h2h.jobs. H2H makes it easy for Reserve Component service members to connect to and find jobs with military-friendly companies. H2H also offers career exploration tools, military-to-civilian skills translations, education and training resources, as well as a mobile app. Contact: Wendy London Wilson
Employment Transition Coordinator - Alabama DOD Contractor - IIF Data Solutions
OSD/RA (YRRP/EIP/ESGR) and Hero-

2Hired (H2H)

Phone: 334-213-7602

Email: wendy.wilson@iifdata.com

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK www.facebook.com/ALESGR. (Check here for job announcements!)

Last but not least is the Alabama Career Centers. There is a Career Center located in almost every county. At the larger Career Centers there are Veterans Employment Representatives, also known as Vet Reps who assist businesses and veterans with their employment needs. You can visit your local Career Center or register at: <https://joblink.alabama.gov/ada/>. At this link you can also find locations of Career Centers and unemployment compensation information.

Your job search will be more effective if you first take time to create a plan. Make a weekly or daily schedule of job search activities. This plan will help you keep track during your search. Develop your own schedule by committing to at least some of the following activities:

Get help with your job search

- Find and contact your local Alabama Career Center to talk with a counselor and

learn what specific resources might be available to help in your search.

- Take assessments to identify your skills, interests, values, or other traits.
 - Prepare your resume.
 - Get in touch with your networking contacts.
 - Attend job search training sessions or related training.
 - Explore career options
 - Set up informational interviews.
 - Talk with someone every day about your job search.
 - Read professional journals and other career resources.
 - Research potential employers.
- Search for jobs
- Review electronic job search tools, online job boards and newspaper job ads
 - Attend job search fairs.
- From "Create a Job Search Plan," <http://www.careeronestop.org/JobSearch/PlanYourJobSearch/create-a-job-search-plan.aspxq>
For more information or assistance contact:
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MY
CIVILIAN
LIFE

STAND-UP COMIC

CPT Jody Fuller is a serious Soldier, having deployed to Iraq three times. But when he's not serving his country as a logistics officer for Alabama's 111th Ordnance Group, he's serving up laughs, using his experience as a stutterer not only to entertain others but to empower them.

INTERVIEW BY MATT CROSSMAN

■ **My mother says she'll never forget my first words.** She said, "We don't know what the hell you said, but it had 15 syllables. We thought you were a genius."

■ **Getting into public speaking was a long journey.** It started out as strictly comedy. Along the way, people would tell me how my public speaking was an inspiration to them because of my stutter. We all know the average person's No. 1 fear is public speaking. People said they never looked at stuttering in the light I showed them until they heard it from me.

■ **You have to have mini-goals along the way.** You can't just jump from A to Z without going through everything else.

■ **At the risk of sounding arrogant, I always thought I had a bigger purpose** than just making people laugh. I had a message to share, too. That spread from just stuttering to Veterans' issues and Veterans' awareness as well.

■ **I always start out strong with a joke.** They tend to work well, so I know I got them right there. I'll let them know I'm not making fun of stuttering—what I'm doing is bringing awareness to stuttering.

■ **When I'm in the Southeast, because we're so heavily involved in football,** I always tell everybody that I come from a long line of disabilities—I stutter, my father was blind, and my mother and brother are Alabama fans. Because I'm an Auburn guy, all the way.

■ **In January, I'm opening up for Jeff Foxworthy.** I'm excited about that.

■ **I come up with my material by living life and paying attention to everything around me.** I was driving down the road with a friend of mine last year. We pulled up to a traffic light. He said, "Jody, do you think they drove all the way up here from Ecuador?" I said, "Say what?" He said, "That car tag in front of us, look, they're from Ecuador." I leaned forward. I looked at it real good. I looked over at him and said, "Dude, that says, 'educator.'"



A MIC AND
A MISSION

Fuller, who's also a writer and motivational speaker, gives voice to Veterans' issues.