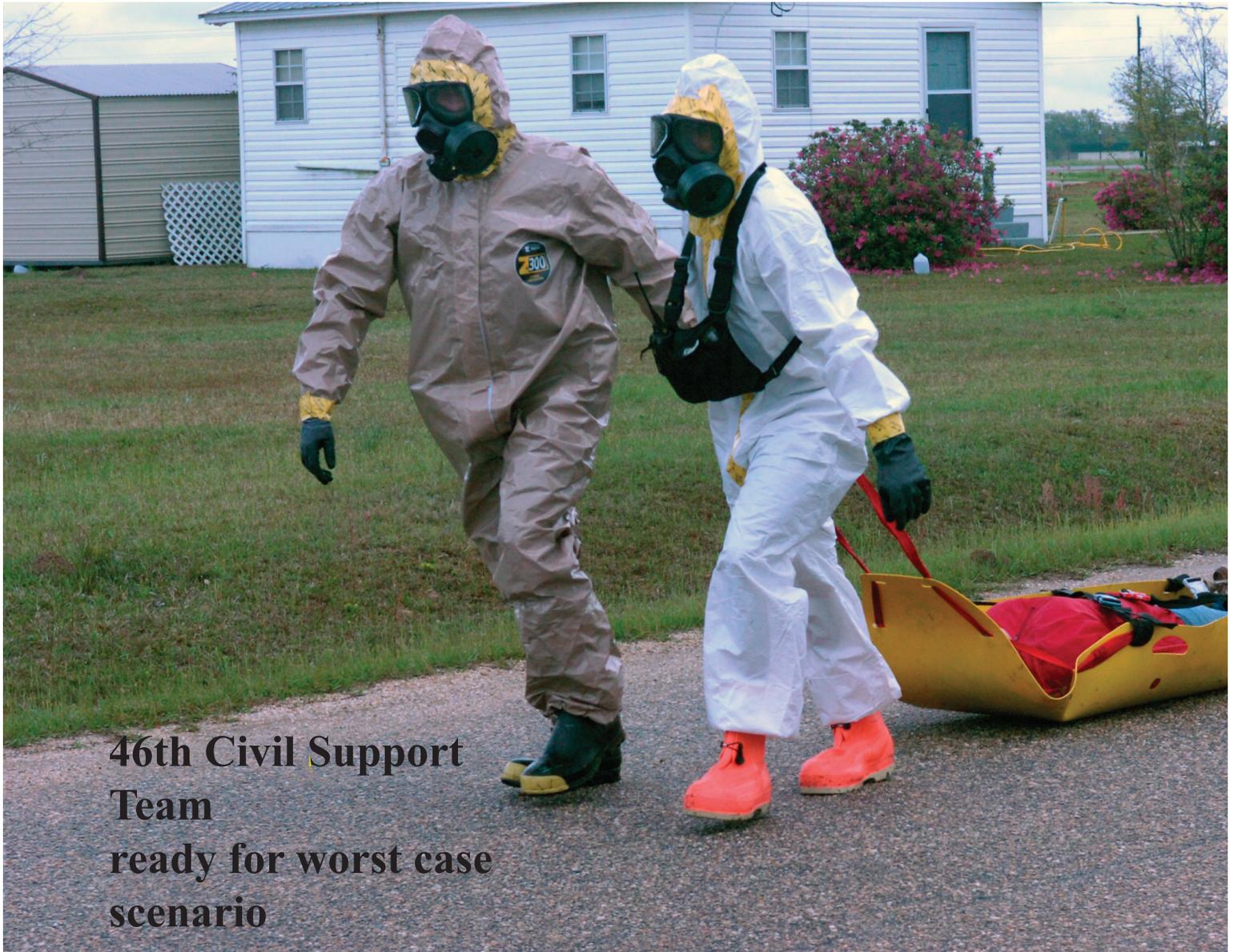


Alabama Guardsman

Vol. II 2009

A publication for the citizen-Soldiers & Airmen of Alabama



**46th Civil Support
Team
ready for worst case
scenario**

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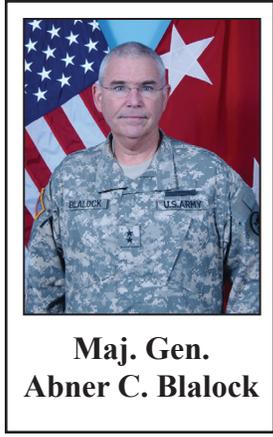
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Adjutant General

Strategic planning important for Alabama Guard



Maj. Gen. Abner C. Blalock

As the National Guard continues to grow and succeed across the Nation, we find new challenges for our organization: a new national strategy in our fight against terrorism; evolving

priorities for our limited funding resources; a new environment in terms of recruiting and retention. These challenges will require all of us to be at our best if we are to continue our progress in becoming a premiere organization that is ready in War and Peace to serve our Nation, State and Communities in time of need.

Our work on the Alabama National Guard Strategic plan has never been more critical. Our work is along five lines of operation: Leading the Force, Setting the

Force, Manning the Force, Resourcing the Force and Training the Force. We will communicate to the entire force all the objectives and initiatives within each of these lines of operation.

Leading the Force is a series of initiatives that will enable of strong organization over the long term. These initiatives serve one of our centers of gravity of the Alabama National Guard: our soldiers and airmen that serve our organization. Leading the Force is designed with an objective of growing and developing future leaders throughout the organization, at every level of leadership. There are many components of Leading the Force.

We will institute a formal self-development program for our soldiers and airmen that prepare them for success in future assignments. Current supervisors, first line leaders, raters and senior raters each have a critical role in advising and implementing a self development plan for their subordinates. Each individual also has a key role by setting a goal and doing the things required to achieve the goal.

Each NCO leader and officer must also take the time to mentor the members of their team. Mentoring enables sharing of experiences from senior soldiers and airmen to

junior soldiers and airmen. It places junior members in roles that allow them learn through successes and mistakes in a manner that reduces risk to the organization, while providing an environment for learning for our junior members.

We must have effective military leaders in the Alabama National Guard who are resolute when facing high risks and who always reflect the “special trust and confidence” reposed in them. To me, a good leader is a Soldier or Sailor who acts according to the Army ethic and demonstrates honesty, integrity and about all, decisiveness.

Dare to be an innovator and a changer. Don’t be satisfied if there is something better out there. We all grow when skillful leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better.

One of my fundamental beliefs is that every soldier and airman is a leader. Those around each service member are influenced by each individual action in some manner. Success in Leading the Force will ensure each and every one of these actions result in a positive result for the individual and the organization. I look forward to your success in making tomorrow’s leaders better than today’s leaders!
Proud to Serve!

Alabama Guardsman

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On the Cover

Members of the 46th Civil Support Team, worked with state and local first responders during Operation Dragon Slayer, held on the Poarch Creek Indian Reservation in Atmore, Ala. This was the first time an exercise like this had been held on an indian reservation. (Photo by James Brown)

State Command Sergeant Major

Soldiers control the future of their careers



**Command Sgt. Maj.
Danny Ashley**

Over the past few months a lot of emphasis has been placed on preparing Soldiers and families for deployments.

Soldiers have spent 21 days

doing train-up in the forward operating base on Pelham Range, conducting weapons qualification, convoy exercises, simulation training on various weapons. Units have conducted additional drills for training in order to shorten the time at the mobilization station.

Families have attended various programs offered by our military support organizations in order to be better prepared for the upcoming deployments and absence of a family member for an extended period of time.

A great deal of time has been expended by many people to ensure that our Soldiers and families are well prepared for the months and years ahead of the Alabama National Guard.

In spite of all we do to prepare and train our Soldiers, we still have a large number who fail to prepare, not only for deployments, but for their future in the Alabama National Guard.

One of the biggest problems we have with readiness on the medical side of deployment is dental issues. As commanders brief the leadership of the National Guard on readiness of the unit, the one constant is that many of our Soldiers have failed to properly take care of their teeth.

Another problem that will impact Soldiers in their career in the National



Martin Dyson/Photo

Maintaining a high level of physical fitness is one of the key building blocks in the career of a non-commissioned officer.

Guard is failure to complete Non-Commissioned Officer Education System (NCOES) for the next higher rank.

Failure to pass the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) and meet weight standards may not prevent a Soldier from deploying but it will have a definite impact on promotion potential and longevity in the National Guard.

I cannot emphasize enough how important it is for soldiers to complete the Warrior Leadership Course (WLC), Basic Non-Commissioned Officer Course (BNOC) and Advanced Non-Commissioned Officer Course (ANOC) pass the APFT and meet weight standards.

These areas, along with duty qualifications, will have a great impact on promotion potential and the retainability of a soldier once he/she completes 20 years for retirement purposes.

I encourage each of you to take care of your physical health and to continue in your NCOES in order to have a

long and rewarding career in the Alabama Army National Guard.

NCOES Courses

WLC - Teaches Soldiers the basic skills to lead small groups of Soldiers.

BNOC - Teaches Soldiers how to lead within a specific Army job.

ANOC - Prepares E-7's to serve at Installation Level and readies them for promotion to E-8.

First Sergeant Academy - Prepares E-8's for the position of First Sergeant of a company, battery or troop.

Army Sergeants Major Academy - Designed for noncommissioned officers to become senior leaders in the Army.

Command Sergeants Major Academy - Prepares E-9's to perform the duties of a Battalion Command Sergeant Major.

Snap Shots

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

Maj. Gen. Abner C. Blalock, state adjutant general, shakes hands with Staff Sgt. Daniel Rhudy at a deployment ceremony held at the Winfield National Guard armory, for the 166th Engineer Company. The 166th left for Camp Atterbury, Ind. in March for a quick training period before deploying to Afghanistan. Once they are in country, the unit's mission is to help construct base camp facilities, help maintain existing facilities, and help the Afghan people improve their infrastructure.

Katrina Timmons/photo



Brig. Gen. Sheryl Gordon accepts the 62nd Troop Command Guidon from Maj. Gen. Abner C. Blalock, adjutant general of Alabama, signifying her assumption of command. The 62nd has more than 5,000 Soldiers assigned to it, making it the largest major command in the Alabama National Guard.

Gordon, who was promoted to brigadier general prior to the ceremony, is Alabama's first female general officer.

Prior to taking command of the 62nd, Gordon served as Commander of the 151st Chemical Battalion in Fort Payne as well as assignments in units in Montgomery, Jasper, Srema, Tallassee and Birmingham.

Katrina Timmons/photo



Brian McNutt/photo

(Left) Major Kevin Mahar, hook up man and course director, LeMay Center for Doctrine, attaches a 4,000 pound Type V pallet platform to a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter from Alpha Company, 1-131 Aviation Regiment, Alabama Army National Guard, as part of a slingload exercise at Maxwell Air Force Base.

(Below) Maj. Gen. Abner C. Blalock (left) hands an Alabama state flag to Lt. Col. Mike Edwards, at a deployment ceremony for the Embedded Training Team. The 16 man team, will train and mentor the Afghan National Army. The team has chosen “Iron Hammer,” as it’s call sign, which has a double meaning. The hammer represents Alabama’s state bird, the yellowhammer, and iron comes from the bible verse Proverbs 27:17 - “As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.”



Jacqueline Romero/photo



Katrina Timmons/photo

(Left) Tech. Sgt. Brian Murphy, 447th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron, holds up a tent support beam at the PAX terminal pad at Sather Air Base, Iraq. Murphy is deployed from the 117th Air Refueling Wing, Birmingham, Alabama Air National Guard.

Vietnam Vet comes in for final landing

by Martin Dyson
Editor

MOBILE - Finding a Soldier who has more time in service than you do is a fairly common occurrence, finding a Soldier who has more time in service than you've been alive is a little less so.

One of the few Soldiers who can say that is Chief Warrant Officer 4 Michael Goodman, a helicopter pilot with Bravo Company, 131st Aviation in Mobile, who has logged nearly 5,000 flight hours over a 38-year distinguished military career that came to an end this past December with his retirement.

"Not in my wildest dreams," Goodman said when asked if he thought his career would last this long. "It's just one of those things you keep doing it and keep doing it and before you know it, it's 30 years later and you're still doing it, I always said if it got to be where it wasn't fun I would quit doing it."

Unlike today's all volunteer force, the military in the 1970's was a lot different, compulsory military service, better known as the draft was in full-swing as millions of Soldiers were needed in Vietnam. Goodman who was eligible to be drafted was faced with a tough decision, try and get a draft exemption, volunteer or wait for his draft number to inevitably come up.

A conversation with a friend who was planning to volunteer as a pilot, helped make his decision. Goodman who had wanted to fly ever since he was kid decided to go with his buddy and volunteer to be an army pilot.

While Goodman was quickly accepted for pilot training, the friend who convinced him to volunteer failed his flight physical and never served a day in the army.

After completing flight school, Goodman soon found himself shipped to Vietnam as an OH-6 Cayuse (Loach) instructor pilot with the 101st Airborne Division's, 163rd Aviation Company.



Courtesy photo



Chief Warrant Officer 4 Michael Goodman as a young OH-6 pilot in Vietnam (above) and as a UH-60 pilot in Mobile prior to his retirement (left). Goodman leaves the Guard ending a career that spanned four decades, accumulating more than 5,000 flight hours.

Martin Dyson/photo

Returning home in 1972 after 12 months in country, the army was drawing down units and cutting numbers so Goodman was able to leave active duty before his four year enlistment was up.

While his time on active duty was over, his time in the cockpit was far from over. A neighbor in Dothan was a recruiter for the Army Reserve, which was standing up new aviation

units, asked if he wanted to join up. So in 1975 Goodman became a member of an aviation assault company at Fort Rucker, where he would spend the next 20 years flying the UH-1 Huey and the UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters.

In 1995 when the Army Reserve started to loose aviation assets Good-

(Please see *Pilot*, page 10)

Guard increases emphasis on motorcycle safety

by Taylor Barbaree
Multi-Media Branch

FORT RUCKER - The Alabama Army National Guard has taken an important step to better protect the lives of its Citizen-Soldiers.

Nine Soldiers recently participated in an eight-hour Military Sport Bike Riders Course (MSRC) aimed at preventing fatalities in the ranks of the Alabama Guard. The one-day certification course was sponsored by the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center (USACRC), National Guard Bureau, Alabama Army National Guard and the Motorcycle Safety Foundation.

"This is our first line of defense in preventing harmful injuries and deaths among our most precious asset — our Soldiers," said Lt. Col. Tim Lewis, state safety manager for the Alabama Army National Guard. "There were seven fatalities involving our Soldiers in 2008 and four were sport bike related. These sport bikes are a lethal weapon for our Soldiers/operators due to the excessive speed they can travel, as well as not

being aware of the risk factors." Of those four deaths in the Alabama Guard involving sport-bikes, Army-wide during FY 2008 there were 37 fatalities according to the USACRC.

"We have way too many deaths and injuries involving Soldiers on sport bikes," said Lt. Col. Craig Lambert, West Virginia Army National Guard facility management officer and MSRC instructor. "This is why this course is so important- it allows Soldiers to think through the decisions they make as sport bike operators."

During the five hours spent at the motorcycle range, Soldiers honed their skills in the areas of basic control, quick stops, stopping demonstrations, curve adjustments, cornering and swerving, multiple curves, decreasing radius curves, gap analysis and safety margins.

Aside from sacrificing part of his Super Bowl Sunday, Pfc. Christopher Fabris, a mechanic with Brundidge's Det. 1, 900th Maintenance Company and sportbike rider for four years, said he took the course to better enhance his skills.

"Attitude is everything to a bike rider because a sport-bike knows no difference. That is why this training is so important," he said. "I learned today that I have some very bad habits that were corrected during this course. I ride my sport bike 12 to 15 hours each week for fun, but I want to ensure that I am the



Taylor Barbaree photo

MSRC Instructor Capt. Thomas Smith, 130th Air Wing, West Virginia Air National Guard, gives directions to Soldiers of the Alabama Army National Guard during the MSRC held at Fort Rucker.

safest driver that I can be."

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Chris Butts, a 13-year Guard veteran with Det. 1, Co. C, 151 Avn BN based in Birmingham, also noted the importance of the MSRC.

"No matter how much experience you have on a sportbike, training such as this is essential," Butts said. "As an aviator, (OH-58 helicopters), I can relate to the importance of safety as an operator of my Suzuki Hayabusa. Today's training was great, and it is my hope that this course will be offered to other Soldiers."

Lewis indicated that five MSRCs are in the works for this year for an estimated 600 Guard Soldiers. The courses will be offered free-of-charge and in IDT status.

For more information about motorcycle safety information and resources/tools to prevent off-duty accidents in your ranks visit the USACRC website at <https://safety.army.mil/>.

Alabama National Guard Motorcycle Safety Policy

1. All operators of privately owned motorcycles or mopeds must complete an approved rider or operator safety course. This training is provided at no cost to the Soldier thru the State Safety Office.

2. The following PPE is required anytime personnel are an operator or passenger of a motorcycle or moped: A properly fastened DOT certified helmet w/ face shield or shatter proof goggles, sturdy footwear, long sleeved shirt or jacket, long trousers and gloves designed for use on a motorcycle.

3. Following every motorcycle fatality or serious injury, commanders will conduct an assessment of the accident. Their findings, to include possible prevention measures, will be forwarded to The Adjutant General within 10 days of the accident.

Guard officer among those honored for service

by Steven Reeves
167th Theater Sustainment Cmd.

NORMAL - Maj. Joseph L. Thomas, a member of the Alabama National Guard, has been honored by Alabama A&M University for his contributions to the Global War On Terrorism.

Thomas was recognized at the university's Department of Defense African American History Month Award Program, held Feb. 25 at the Alabama A&M campus.

Thomas was one of 10 military service members honored during the African American History Month program. All of the honorees were selected for being positive role models to young people in addition to their military service.

"This means a lot to me, being recognized for my contributions to the war on terror," Thomas said. "This is definitely one of the high points of my military career."

Thomas' award citation noted his "exceptionally meritorious service" to the Alabama National Guard's the plans and transportation officer for the 1103rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion. Thomas was deployed with the 1103rd to Camp Taji, Iraq, from July 2007 to April 2008, during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Thomas "single-handedly transformed the Battalion Support Operations Transportation staff into an effective and efficient combat multiplier," the award citation noted.

Thomas was responsible for managing numerous assets, including convoy security, heavy equipment and petroleum transportation, a cargo transfer platoon and two palletized loading system companies. Thomas oversaw more than 1,000 pieces of transportation equipment in support of combat operations. Thomas' award citation said his actions "are in keeping with the finest traditions of military service and reflect distinct credit upon himself, the National Guard Bureau, the United States Army and the



Steven Reeves/photo

Clarence Johnson, Office of the Secretary of Defense (left), Maj. Joseph Thomas and Maj. Gen. Joe Harkey of the Alabama National Guard, attended the DoD African American History Month Award Program, held at Alabama A&M in Huntsville. Thomas was honored by the university for his contributions to the Global War on Terrorism.

Department of Defense."

Thomas said receiving the African American History Month award gave him an opportunity to reflect upon his experience in Iraq.

"Because the pace of operations are so fast when you are on deployment, you really don't get a sense of accomplishment until you get home," he said. "We were all able to do so many good things while we were in theater."

Air Force Col. Alvin Kemmet, deputy director of the Missile and Space

Intelligence Center and one of the award ceremony's speakers, said Thomas and the other awardees were only the latest in a long line of African American military service members who have distinguished themselves in combat.

"African American soldiers have fought in every war the United States has participated in," Kemmet said. "Throughout history, African Americans have displayed great courage in serving their country."

SOUND OFF

DO YOU HAVE AN OPINION ON THE NEW DIGITAL VERSION OF "THE GUARDSMAN"? DO YOU HAVE A STORY IDEA OR WOULD LIKE TO SEE YOUR UNIT FEATURED IN THE NEXT ISSUE?

IF SO DROP US A LINE AND LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK. FEEDBACK AND SUBMISSIONS CAN BE E-MAILED TO "THE GUARDSMAN" AT MARTIN.DYSON@US.ARMY.MIL OR JAMES.LAURENCE.BROWN@US.ARMY.MIL.

Joint helicopter training benefits Airmen, Soldiers and first responders

by Lt. Col.
Kjäll Gopaul
Contributing
Writer

In a scene reminiscent of a battlefield, a military helicopter followed a billowing trail of green signaling smoke into a tactical landing zone. With each rotation of the helicopter's rotor, well-trained Airmen off-loaded the helicopter and lay on the ground with M-16 rifles in the prone supported firing position. Simultaneously, another "chalk" of 11 Airmen bounded across the landing zone from their assembly area to the awaiting aircraft. Seconds later, they were airborne! While one expects this scene to be repeated endlessly in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Horn of Africa, it actually took place at Maxwell Air Force Base on 11 December 2008.

The helicopter support was provided by the A Company, 1st Battalion, 131st Aviation Regiment of the Alabama Army National Guard from the Bobby Hogan Army Aviation Support Facility in Montgomery commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Norman.

The UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter was part of a tactical passenger loading and emergency egress training exercise supporting the Air Force Judge Advocate General's School (AFJAGS) and the Maxwell Air Force Base Fire



Kjäll Gopaul/photo

A chalk of 11 Airmen from the Air Force Judge Advocate General's School tactically load aboard a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter from Alpha Company, 1/131st Aviation Regiment, while another chalk of Airmen form a perimeter. The multi-service deployment readiness exercise took place at Maxwell Air Force Base.

Department. The recent event consisted of 31 Airmen from AFJAGS, the 42nd Air Base Wing, and the LeMay Center for Doctrine Development and Education training on passenger operations with the helicopter, and egress training for base first responders.

The afternoon's exercise started as ten crash/rescue first responders from Maxwell Air Force Base Fire Department received emergency extrication training from the air mission commander and State TACOPS Officer, Chief Warrant Officer 5 Bryant Fontenot. Timothy Shaw, assistant chief of operations for A-shift at the Maxwell Air Force Base Fire Department commented on the value of the training.

"The benefit to our first responders is that we can provide better crash/rescue support to helicopter aircrews if they

have a problem. We routinely receive some computer training on egress procedures, but that can't substitute for the hands-on training -- it's invaluable. Having the crew member explain it is the best training we can get. In particular, the safety measures on approaching the aircraft -- the approach angles -- are the most important, and they took the time to show us." Mr. Shaw continued, saying, "We appreciate the opportunity to come out and support the mission because it is preparing Airmen to do what they have to do downrange. While there is always some risk working around military air-

craft, when you can control the risks in a training environment and accomplish the mission, rather than on-the-fly in the deployed AOR (area of responsibility), it's a lot better."

Subsequently, helicopter crew chiefs Staff Sergeant Mark Boswell and Sergeant Erick Horne from Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 131st Aviation Regiment trained the chalks on tactical passenger loading. The chalk members wore their Airman Battle Uniforms and carried M-16 rifles to train as they fight, and work through the challenges of handling themselves and their equipment. They learned about staging area procedures, on-loading, in-flight safety and operations, and off-loading. The goal is to

(Please see *Air Force*, page 10)

(Pilot continued from page 6)

man and a number of his fellow pilots made the transition to National Guard aviation units that were just starting to get the Blackhawk.

Despite having to commute from Dothan to his new unit in Mobile, Goodman said "It never crossed his mind to quit, I just wanted to keep flying."

According to Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Fleming, Readiness NCO for Bravo Company, Goodman could always be counted on for whatever missions came up. "He (Goodman) readily supported the unit in a multitude of missions, from disaster relief to aircraft recovery missions to supporting training missions."

For the next ten years Goodman kept flying, seemingly destined to quietly finish his career with Bravo Company.

However 9/11 changed all that, with National Guard units being deployed at a record pace, Goodman knew

(Air Force continued from page 9)

have the chalk loaded and safe as quickly as possible -- this minimizes the aircraft's time on the ground and vulnerability as a high value target.

First Lieutenant Shethar McGuire, co-pilot and assistant operations officer of 1st Battalion, 131st Aviation Regiment, underscored the benefit of the day's training for the aircrew. "This training was a good opportunity to support a real world mission. Any opportunity we have to conduct realistic support missions with passengers elevates us out of the training mode, and allow us practical application of our TTPs (tactics, techniques, and procedures) to real world scenarios."

The day before their graduation, the helicopter training served as the capstone event for the Judge Advocate Staff Officer Course's "Operations Week" intended to introduce new military lawyers to expeditionary operations. Captain David Cromwell, a student at AFJAGS, noted afterward, "Co-workers in my

it was just a matter of time before his number came up again.

"It may sound corny, but I've been in the Reserve and Guard for a long time and there has always been the possibility that you would have to deploy and that's part of being in, is that you might have to go somewhere," Goodman said. "Even if I had been able to get out, I wouldn't have wanted to, because all my friends were going."

In 2006, 35 years after his first deployment Goodman found himself mobilized at Fort Hood, preparing to go again. "The training was the worst part (of the deployment)," Goodman said.

"We had to walk everywhere, because the trainers said we were going to walk in Iraq so we needed to practice. After four months of training, Goodman and the rest of his fellow pilots were in Iraq flying a variety of missions, from shuttling VIP's and supplies around to supporting Medical Evacuation missions.

office tell me that helicopters are how you get around in Iraq. Knowing how to safely and quickly get aboard them puts us one step ahead."

Major Robert Zauner, instructor, Operations and International Law Division at AFJAGS, echoed this sentiment, stating, "With respect to roadside IEDs (improvised explosive devices), it's generally considered safer to travel by helicopter in Iraq than in a vehicle convoy. Exposing our Airmen to the challenges and stress of helicopter operations here at Maxwell AFB will allow them to focus on the mission when they deploy, rather than be distracted by the 'newness' of working around aircraft."

Major John Fleet, the operations officer of 1st Battalion, 131st Aviation Regiment of the Alabama Army National Guard in Montgomery, noted the value of such training for aircrews as well as passengers.

"This on-loading and off-loading

Being the senior pilot in the unit, didn't catch Goodman any breaks when it came to flying. "I ended up with the second most flight hours (570) in the unit during Iraq, up until about the last two months I had the most and then had a lot of stand-by missions and finished second."

Returning home from Iraq, Goodman decided not to extend his time in the Guard, bringing an end to a long and remarkable career.

"Goody will be missed, Fleming said. "But we're all happy that he has finally arrived at the point in life where he and his wife will be able to enjoy the fruits of his labor."

But don't expect Goodman to enjoy those fruits with both feet on the ground. Goodman said he would like to keep flying after retiring, either as an instructor or even getting his fixed-wing license. Whatever he ends up choosing, Goodman is sure to stick with it for the long haul.

training for passengers is extremely valuable. Our unit recently returned from Iraq; we repeatedly saw the problems of passengers not knowing how to quickly board an aircraft to secure themselves and their gear.

If a helicopter sat on the ground in certain FOBs (forward operating base), it would just be a matter of minutes before enemy mortar rounds would start falling. It becomes a huge force protection risk to spend 15 minutes at certain FOBs instructing everyone how to buckle their seatbelt and stow their gear.

Anything we can do to improve safety for both the deployed aircrews and passengers benefits everyone."

- Lt. Col. Kjäll Gopaul, is the Chief of the Doctrine Education Division at the LeMay Center for Doctrine Development and Education, located at Maxwell Air Force Base.

Candidates: “Start Your Engines”

by Katrina Timmons
Staff Writer

A patriotic cry of motivation and enthusiasm echoed through the empty grand stands of Talladega Super-speedway last week as 190 officer candidates rounded the two mile track to finish a seven mile road-march.

The officer candidates are from the Alabama National Guard Training Site at Fort McClellan, Ala. where they are currently enrolled in officer candidate school (OCS).

The seven mile march is one of many mandatory training missions the candidates must successfully complete in order to graduate from the program.

Col. Charles Keith, commandant at the training site, worked with track officials arranging for the candidates to make one lap of the track before ending their seven-mile march at the start-finish line.

“The Talladega Superspeedway is a fantastic neighbor to allow us this memorable opportunity,” said Keith.

The 190 candidates represented 40 states, so there was plenty of NASCAR fans scattered through the ranks. For some, this was their first time to visit a race track.

“This is awesome,” said Richard Sands of Michigan. “I am a huge NASCAR fan.” Sands says his favorite driver is Dale Earnhardt, Jr., who currently drives the #88 National Guard and AMP racecar.

NASCAR fan or not, most of the candidates have watched the movie “Talladega Nights: The Legend of Ricky Bobby” starring comedic actor Will Farrell. The movie is a spoof about a NASCAR driver, Farrell, who

looses everything after being in a terrible race-car accident, including his ability to “go fast,” and must overcome his fears and win at Talladega.

Many of the candidates were heard saying quotes from the movie like “Shake-n-Bake” and “If you’re not first – You’re Last.”

Officer candidate Anthony Rose from South Carolina says he was born in a car just like Ricky Bobby and now he’s been given the opportunity to walk in Will Farrell’s footsteps as he marches around Talladega.

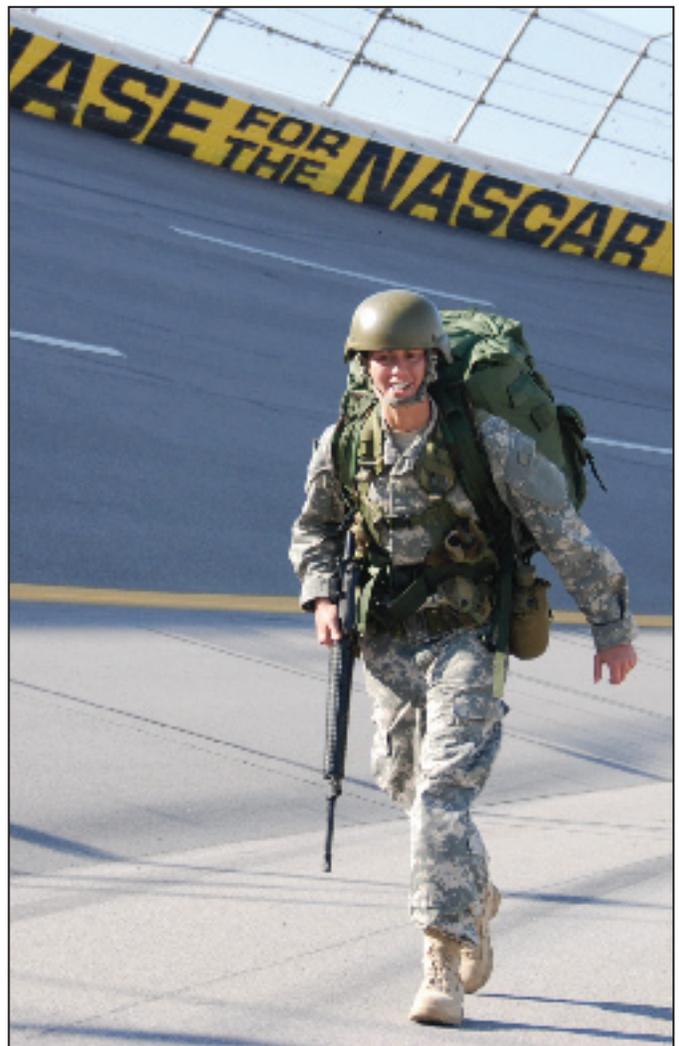
With stories such as these, it’s easy to see why this is the second OCS class Keith has led around the speedway.

“Its exciting and motivating for the candidates,” said Keith.

All 190 candidates crossed the finish-line completing the seven mile road-march in full “battle rattle.”

Keith attributes the class’s success to the OCS cadre. “This is the best staff and organization in the Army National Guard. Their dedication to the job is outstanding.”

Officer Candidate John McNally of Nebraska agrees with Keith. “They prepared us well,” explained McNally. “They got us in good shape and then rallied us together last night to pump us up for the



Katrina Timmons/photo

An officer candidate walks the final lap at the Talladega SuperSpeedway, completing a seven-mile road march. Nearly 200 candidates took part in the road march, which is a requirement for graduation.

march.”

Maj. Anthony Cloud, a TAC officer at the training site, said members of this particular class of candidates were already in great shape.

“This class has the highest physical training (PT) scores I’ve ever seen,” said Cloud. Cloud said the average PT score was 300 with the highest score of 423 from a female candidate. Scoring 300 is considered “maxing” the PT test.

“They did a great job,” said Keith, “But they still have many challenges ahead of them. Keith says their next road-march will be 10 miles long.

Agencies team up to practice disaster response

by **Jamie Brown**
Senior Editor

ATMORE - In an historic event, members of the Alabama National Guard joined several other state and local agencies in a disaster exercise here on Thursday, March 26. It was the first time in American history that a state level homeland security exercise had been conducted on a federal Indian reservation.

Operation Dragon Slayer is an annual exercise conducted by the Alabama National Guard and Alabama Department of Homeland Security. It tests how different departments and agencies react to a domestic attack or emergency. The twist this year was responding on sovereign land – the Poarch Creek Indian Reservation. The exercise was developed with the assistance of the Center for National Response, a division of the Joint Interagency Training and Education Center.

Having the exercise take place on the reservation presented a unique scenario according to Jim Walker, the Director of the Alabama Department of Homeland Security.

“This is a sovereign nation, even though it is in Alabama, so, they have their own government and other structures,” he said. “During the exercise, they had to look outside of what they normally do to coordinate and collaborate with other local and state assets.”

That type of collaboration is exactly what took place. The exercise centered around the annual Thanksgiving Day Pow Wow celebration. The exercise scenario, had a crop duster flying over and emitting a chemical over the reservation. The Poarch Creek Indians’ first responders reacted, assessed the situation and called for assistance.

Part of that assistance came from the Alabama National Guard’s 46th Civil Support Team. The 46th, based in Montgomery, is made up of full-time

Army and Air Force personnel. Its mission is to support civil authorities at a Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear or Explosives (CBRNE) incident site by identifying CBRNE agents/substances, assessing current or projected consequences, advising on response measures and assisting with requests for additional support.

The 46th is a valuable tool for the state and would be a key part in dealing with an attack.

“The 46th CST is a terrific asset for the state,” said Walker. “They bring a lot of chemical detection capability and well trained soldiers to bear when we ask for them. The governor is able to call the civil support team and they can usually reach back into their repository of detecting hundreds of different chemical agents, and determine what we’re dealing with pretty quickly. It gives the governor a valuable resource he controls, and the value of time to make some decisions on how to mitigate or solve whatever issue we’re faced with.”

To maintain its’ capabilities, the 46th CST participates in exercises like



Andrew Richardson/photo

The Poarch Creek Volunteer Fire Department were the first responders during the Dragon Slayer exercise. After assessing the situation, they called for backup in the form of the 46th CST.

Dragon Slayer.

“Participating in an exercise like we performed today is real world,” said Staff Sgt. Claytie Leonard, communications chief for the 46th. “This is what you run into. You have mass casualties and when you’re working, you get the weight of the person just like it is in the real world. In a standard exercise you won’t get that.”

(Please see CST, page 13)

(CST continued from page 12)

Maj. John Ward, plans and operations officer for the directorate of military support for the Alabama National Guard agreed the exercise was beneficial for the 46th CST.

“With any exercise you’re going to learn how well you know what you know and also you learn what you don’t know,” he said. “For the CST, it’s an opportunity to integrate, many times for the first time, with a particular organization. This is their first time to integrate with Poarch Creek and Atmore.”

The 46th CST wasn’t the only group to benefit from Operation Dragon Slayer. The Poarch Creek Indians also found it to be helpful.

“The benefits are two-fold,” said April Sells, Tribal Emergency Management Director for the Poarch Band of Creek Indians. “One of the things that happened is that it allowed us to see the gaps in our services, personnel and equipment. Nationwide it allows other Indian tribes to see the relationship that we have with agencies within our own state, and encourage them to do the same thing. We have to realize that if a terrorist event occurs, or any event of this caliber occurs in any county, municipality, or Indian reservation, it’s just not on that particular land. It spreads, so we all need to learn to work together.”

Another benefit of the exercise was the chance to strengthen the rela-



Andrew Richardson/photo

Members of the Alabama Guard 46th Civil Support Team pull a person through a decontamination site during Operation Dragon Slayer.

tionship between the Alabama National Guard and the Poarch Creek Indians, a relationship that is not new.

“We’ve worked with the Guard on numerous occasions,” said Sells “Our first encounter with the Alabama National Guard came after Hurricane Ivan. There was a group that came in, and we worked closely with them. So this was not the first time we’ve had the National Guard on the reservation. When we see them coming we say ‘here comes help.’”

According to Sells, Operation Dragon Slayer was valuable in setting the tone for future cooperation with the Guard and other state agencies.

“I think that now we know

each other and if we need each other, we’re only a phone call away,” she said. “When you work together for as long as we have with the National Guard representatives planning this exercise, it’s a lot easier calling for help when you know that person and what their capabilities are.

“Now the National Guard knows what our capabilities are and we know theirs. Those agencies that were observing, we also know what their capabilities are. We learned a lot. We learned that there are other agencies out there that have capabilities that we may need if we had a huge situation to occur not only on this reservation, but in this county.”

Goodwater Guardsmen say goodbye to Al-Asad

by Kiyoshi Freeman
3rd Sustainment Command PAO

AL ASAD AIR BASE, Iraq – Alabama National Guardsmen handed over their mission purifying water to a reserve unit from Texas during a transfer of authority ceremony Jan. 23.

“The ultimate weapon lives on water,” said Sgt. 1st Class Forkpa Akoi, water purification non-commissioned officer in charge, 548th Combat Support Sustainment Brigade. “Without water, we can’t do anything. And [1207th Quartermaster Detachment] has been very, very much instrumental in providing this life-sustaining commodity.”

A National Guard unit from Goodwater, a town named for a local fresh water spring, the 19 Soldiers of the 1207th QM were responsible for providing clean water at four bases in Anbar province, including Al Asad.

“Clean drinking water is something we all take for granted, and it doesn’t just happen,” said Lt. Col. Mary Abrams, commanding officer, 548th CSSB.

She stressed the importance of the 1207th QM’s mission purifying water for coalition forces in Anbar province.

“One of the [1207th QM’s] most notable achievements, though, is establishing Iraqi self-sufficiency at the water treatment plant at Camp Mejid,” Abrams went on to say, referring to how one of the Soldiers spent months training his Iraqi counterparts on water purification operations.

Since the beginning of their deployment 10 months ago, the 1207th QM has purified approximately nine million gallons of water, or enough water to fill 144 million eight-ounce glasses, Akoi said.

Over four million gallons of water came out of Freedom Lake, a reservoir filled by a natural spring. The water bubbles to the surface along with deposits of sulfur, which produces a very distinct

rotten egg smell until it’s processed, he said.

This water, after it goes through various filters and a reverse osmosis process, is used by coalition forces for showers, laundry and dining facility operations, as well as construction purposes, said Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Knight, detachment sergeant, 1207th QM, and native of Lineville.

More importantly, though, the water is used to reduce airborne dust, which lowers visibility and damages sensitive military equipment, he said.

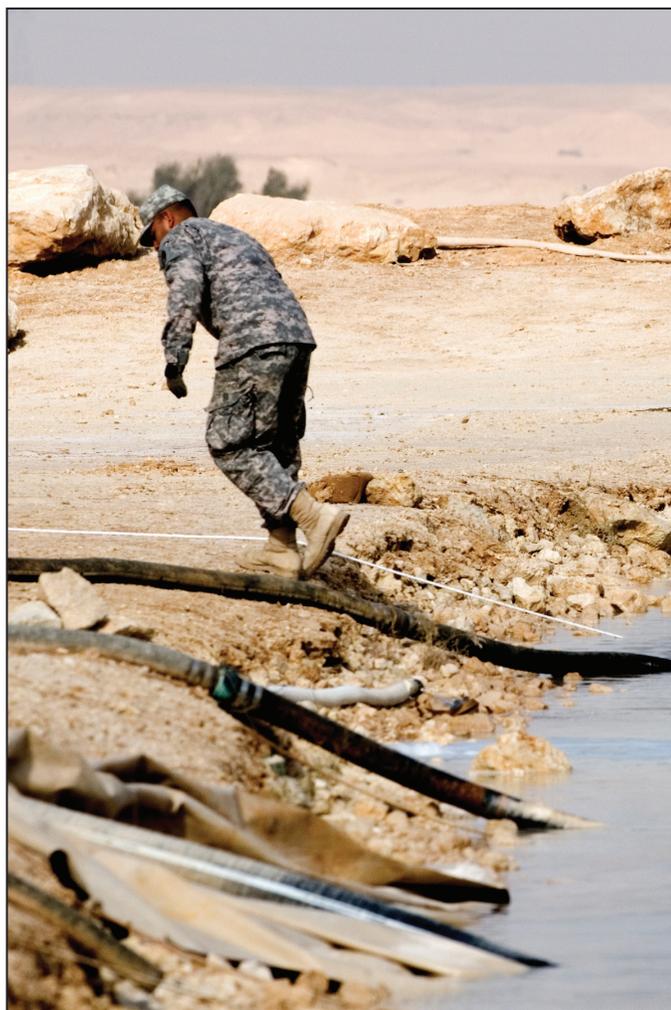
It was this type of flexibility – training Iraqis, setting up operations at Camp Korean Village within 48 hours, working in small two or three man sections – that typified the deployment and made the Soldiers successful, Knight said.

“Not only did we have to do water operations, but some of our Soldiers had to work outside their MOS [job] and stepped up in a big way,” he said. “And that accomplished the mission as well.”

Looking back, the 1207th QM’s greatest challenge during its deployment was working with 14-year old equipment, said 1st Lt. Jessica Moore, commanding officer of the 1207th QM, and native of Huntsville.

Four of the detachment’s Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Units were refurbished so they would be in good working order for their relieving unit, the 961st Quartermaster Detachment, a reserve unit from McAllen, Texas.

Staff Sgt. Jose Villanueva, acting



Kiyoshi Freeman/photo

A Soldier with the 961st Quartermaster Detachment fills a jar with water to test it at Freedom Lake, Al Asad Air Base, Iraq. The 961st took over water purification operations from the 1207th QM Det. in January.

first sergeant, 961st QM, and native of San Antonio, said he was confident his unit was prepared for their mission and the 1207th QM had set them up for success.

When asked what he thought of their mission, he said, “I think it [water purification] plays a vital role in today’s combat environment. It’s necessary for everyday life. Everyone needs water.”

Looking back, Knight said, “It was a good experience. I’ve been in the military for 19 years now. And if I had to do it over again, I’d probably do it the same way.”