

# Alabama Guardsman

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# Alabama Guard celebrates new facility with ribbon cutting

by Spc. Brenda Thomas  
Public Affairs Office

MONTGOMERY, Ala. -- While many in the nation were remembering Pearl Harbor, the Alabama Army National Guard conducted a ribbon cutting ceremony on the new Joint Force Headquarters Armed Forces Readiness Center here December 7, 2011.

The Alabama National Guard units located in the new facility are the Joint Force Headquarters, the 22nd Recruiting and Retention Battalion, the 131st Mobile Public Affairs Detachment and the 151st Army Band; and the United States Army Reserve's, 7233rd Medical Support Unit, 358th Medical Detachment Veterinary Services, 282nd Quartermaster Company and 206th Transportation Company.

Robert Bentley, Governor of Alabama; Todd Strange, Mayor of Montgomery; Maj. Gen. Perry G. Smith, the Adjutant General of the Alabama National Guard; and Maj. Gen. Gill P. Beck, commander of the United States Army Reserve's 81st Regional Support Command all took part in the ceremony.

Although the occupants started moving



Brenda Thomas/photo

*Maj. Gen. Perry G. Smith, the Adjutant General of Alabama speaks at the Joint Force Headquarters Armed Forces Readiness Center ribbon cutting ceremony, Dec. 7, 2011.*

in last December, the building was only finished recently and the work continued around the building's employees. The current facility replaced seven older buildings and has already saved money in energy costs even before many of the energy-saving measures were fully implemented. The new facility is also home to the largest solar project in the state.

"This building is modern," said Smith. "Just like the National Guard is today. This building is for warriors because we still live in a dangerous world."

"After 10 years of war, together, the Army Reserve and the National Guard have made our Army stronger," Beck said. "What we have here is an example of what makes America great and how Americans respond to challenges and how Alabama is leading the way in bringing us together as one team."

Gov. Bentley also praised the finished project but added, "It's not the building, it's the people who occupy the building that are important. I'm proud of this building but prouder of all of you."

## Alabama Guardsman

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## On the Cover

Maj. Gen. Perry G. Smith, The Adjutant General of the Alabama National Guard; Governor Robert Bentley, Governor of Alabama; Maj. Gen. Gill P. Beck, Commander of the 81st Regional Support Command, USAR; and Mayor Todd Strange, Mayor of Montgomery, Ala.; cut the ceremonial ribbon officially opening the new Joint Force Headquarters Armed Forces Readiness Center in Montgomery, Ala., Dec. 7, 2011. (Photo by Spc. Brenda N. Thomas)

## Adjutant General

# A look back on an amazing 2011 in the Alabama Guard



**Maj. Gen.  
Perry Smith**

As the year winds to a close, I want to be sure that every Alabama National Guard Soldier, Airman, civilian and family member knows what an amazing job this organiza-

a good practice run for our big test of the year, the multiple tornadoes that ripped across our state in April.

The dedication and professionalism displayed during that response remains unrivalled across the nation and indeed served as a pattern for other states who dealt with tornadoes and severe flooding just after our tragedies. You exemplified what a Guard warrior is during the days and weeks following those storms. I knew you were a great team before that, but I was still amazed at what a remarkable job you did.

As our year progressed, we marked the tenth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. We remembered those lost that

day and those who fought and are still fighting during the years following. Since that Tuesday morning in 2001, the Alabama National Guard has deployed more than 17,000 troops. Yet, we remain one of the strongest Guards in the nation, number one per capita in number of troops and one of the greatest contributors to the fight.

Shortly after that anniversary, the President announced that all American troops would be out of Iraq by year's end. Even as I write this, Alabama National Guard Soldiers are returning home from their deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. For most of those warriors, **(Please see 2011, page 5)**

tion did this year.

We started working hard early with an ice storm. Our preparation and quick response made that a relatively easy job. That turned out to be

## State Command Sergeant Major

# Some simple rules for keeping the hunting season safe



**Command Sgt.  
Maj.  
Eddie Pike**

Deer hunting season has arrived in our great state, and many Alabama National Guard members will be in the woods and on the green fields in pursuit of that trophy buck.

This can be an enjoyable time of year for Soldiers and their families, but it can also be dangerous as well. As Soldiers and parents, we have the responsibility of being safety con-

scious and of teaching safe hunting practices to our family members.

A resident of Alabama born on or after 1 August 1977 is required to complete a Certified Hunter Safety Course prior to purchasing their hunting license. The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources conducts the Hunter Safety Course at locations throughout the state at no charge to the participant. A student must be at least ten years of age to receive certification, however it is strongly recommended for adults as well. This certification is also accepted by most other states, for those who wish to purchase a non-resident hunting license in another state.

Basic Hunter safety rules:

- \* Keep the firearm muzzle pointed in a safe direction at all times.
  - \* Treat every firearm with the respect due a loaded gun.
  - \* Be sure of your target and what is in front of it and beyond it.
  - \* Keep your finger outside the trigger guard until ready to shoot.
  - \* Wear a blaze orange cap or vest (required by Alabama Law).
  - \* Use a small flashlight during dim-light conditions to identify yourself as a hunter rather than a game animal.
  - \* Inspect tree stands prior to each use.
  - \* Wear a fall restraint device anytime you are climbing, sitting, or descend-
- (Please see *Safe*, page 5)**

# Snap Shots

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



Brenda Thomas/photo

*The Alabama National Guard's 1312th Engineer Detachment has been called to active duty to support Operation Enduring Freedom. Their deployment ceremony was held at Pelham Range, Dec. 19, 2011.*



Brenda Thomas/photo

*After 28 years of service, State Chaplain Col. Coy J. Hallmark retired from the Alabama National Guard, December 4, 2011. Maj. Gen. Perry G. Smith, the Adjutant General of the Alabama National Guard was among many who spoke highly of Col. Hallmark at his retirement ceremony. He began as a chaplain for the 279th Signal Battalion in 1983, and finished his career at Joint Force Headquarters serving as the state chaplain.*



Sandra Lucas/photo

*Mrs. Joan-Marie Dean and Maj. Gen. Perry G. Smith pin new rank on Chief Warrant Officer 5 Max Dean, Command Chief Warrant Officer of the Alabama National Guard, in a promotion ceremony at the Joint Force Headquarters Armed Forces Readiness Center, Montgomery, Ala., Nov. 15, 2011.*



*French dignitaries, local citizens, French veterans, U.S. Army soldiers and other Americans gather in Fere-en-Tarenois, France for the unveiling of a memorial to commemorate the battle of the 'Croix Rouge Farm', November 12, 2011. The 167th Infantry Regiment (Alabama) played a critical role in the World War I battle. Maj. Gen. Perry Smith, the Adjutant General of Alabama and Lt. Col. Larry Norred, 167th Infantry Battalion Commander, were present at the ceremony. "The 167th Infantry Battalion of the Alabama National Guard still carries that lineage and honor today and continues to serve with distinction," said Maj. Gen. Smith. "The 167th will deploy next year to Afghanistan in an effort to liberate another people being unlawfully oppressed. The times are different, the wars are very different in many ways, but the honor and service of the 167th Infantry and the Alabama National*

James Vann/photo

### *(2011 continued from page 3)*

this means they will now be able to spend the holidays with their families. I am proud of the Soldiers and Airmen of the Alabama National Guard. I am proud to be part of an organization that just celebrated its 375th anniversary. I hope that you too are proud of that heritage, of being part of America's oldest military force. We are Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen,

the foundation of America's military might. I am also so proud of families. We all know we couldn't do what we do or be who we are without them. I hope that you will do as I will this holiday season, give an extra hug to family members and thank them for being supportive during hard times.

Finally, even though many are coming home this month, we still

have some comrades-in-arms who are doing their part thousands of miles from home. Remember them and their families in your prayers and also in your holiday activities this year. I wish you a joyous holiday season and a peaceful and prosperous new year. Lead from the front!

### *(Safe continued from page 3)*

-ing from an elevated stand.

\* Never climb with your gun or bow. Use a rope to pull them up after you are seated in the stand, and ensure the firearm is unloaded prior to pulling it up to your position.

Basic Safety rules for operating All Terrain Vehicles (ATV):

\* Never operate an ATV on paved surfaces. They are designed for off-road use only.

\* Never allow anyone under the age of 16 to operate an adult ATV.

\* Wear a helmet, protective clothing and boots above the ankle when riding an ATV.

\* Complete an approved ATV safety course.

By obeying state of Alabama hunting laws, we all become safer hunters. These laws are enforced to protect the safety of hunters and the non-hunting public. As adults, we must set a good example for our young hunters to follow, and make on the spot correc-

tions when we observe unsafe behavior. For more information on hunting regulations and hunter safety information, go to [www.outdooralabama.com](http://www.outdooralabama.com).

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all the Soldiers and Airmen of the Alabama National Guard a very merry Christmas and a safe and happy New Year. Thank you for your service.

# New program helps Guardmembers ASIST in preventing suicide

by Staff Sgt. Martin Dyson  
131st MPAD

MONTGOMERY, AL - It's easy as a member of the military to get caught up in telling people what to do, how to do it and when it should be done. But in at least one case it's better to listen than talk.

The increase in overseas deployments over the past ten years has brought with it an increase in the number of suicides and attempted suicides among military personnel. While many programs are available to cut down on these numbers, new ones are always welcome.

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***“It teaches you to pay more attention and look for signs of trouble.”***

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Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) is the newest tool in the National Guard's fight to curb the rising number of suicides in its' ranks.

ASIST builds upon the Ask, Care, Escort (ACE) training that many Soldiers have already received, with the addition of the intervention skills



Martin Dyson/photo

*1st Sgt. Chuck Lay (left), 31st Signal Co., takes part in a scenario-based exercise during Applied Suicide Intervention Skill Training (ASIST) at the Joint Force Headquarters Armed Forces Readiness Center, Montgomery, Ala. on December 14. In the scenario, Lay played the role of someone threatening to jump of a bridge. Other participants in the exercise tried to talk him out of harming himself.*

that allow people to respond knowledgably and competently to persons at risk of suicide and then get them to the resources that they need.

“This training will give first-line leaders the knowledge of what to do when they get that call from a Soldier,” Dr. Rebecca Jacobson, Resilience Coordinator for the Alabama National Guard said. “We want them to connect to that person and create a warm hand-off to the caregivers.”

The 62nd Troop Command, in Montgomery, is

the first major command in Alabama to participate in the ASIST training. The two-day course utilizes both group training and scenario based training to teach the intervention skills.

1st Sgt. Chuck Lay, 31st Signal Co. who was one of the first participants in the scenario said. “It teaches you to pay more attention and look for signs of trouble. I was just trying to earn his trust (during the scenario) and let him know I cared.”