

Alabama Guardsman

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Guard Soldiers hone skills with airborne training

Contributed Story

GADSDEN -- Members of the Alabama Army National Guard's Group Support Company, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne), based in Gadsden, loaded into a C-23 Sherpa aircraft April 29, 2012.

More than 150 Special Forces Soldiers honed some of their legendary skills during the training at the North-east Alabama Regional Airport's Osborne Drop Zone in Gadsden where they jumped from the ramp of the Sherpa aircraft and conducted airborne operations training.

Special Forces units undergo years of grueling training, including airborne and water operations, to maintain their elite status. The exercise allowed them to practice airborne procedures among other



Contributed/photo

20th Special Forces Group Soldiers board a C-23 Sherpa for airborne operations training in Gadsden, April 29, 2012.

things.

"One of the things that attract young Soldiers to airborne units is the level and intensity of the training. Airborne Soldiers love this business and thrive on these difficult and demanding tasks we perform," said the company's commander, Lt. Col. Philip Clayton.

The unit recently returned from a deployment in Iraq and

is in a training period to prepare for conversion to a Group Support Battalion. Special Forces units are some of the best trained and best equipped forces in the Army. If you are looking for an exciting career opportunity in the Army National Guard, contact the Group Support Company at 256-413-7051.

Alabama Guardsman

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Adjutant General.....Maj. Gen. Perry Smith
Public Affairs Officer.....Col. Dennis Butters
131st MPAD Commander.....Maj. Anthony Laier
Public Affairs Office.....Capt. Andrew Richardson
Senior Editor.....Sgt. 1st Class. Jamie Brown
Senior Editor.....Staff Sgt. Martin Dyson
Staff Writer.....Sgt. Bethany McMeans
Staff Writer.....Spc. Eric Roberts
Staff Writer.....Spc. Tiffany Harkins
Staff Writer.....Spc. Kyle Looney

On the Cover

20th Special Forces Group Soldiers check their gear before an airborne operations training jump in Gadsden, Ala., April 29, 2012. (contributed photo).

Adjutant General

Soldier skills are also valuable to employers



**Maj. Gen.
Perry Smith**

I have been trying to get out in the field more lately. I want to view the troops and get an honest assessment of the training and resilience of the

more than 13,000 Soldiers and Airmen in the Alabama National Guard.

As I have travelled, I have been impressed with the professionalism and attention to

detail of the Alabama National Guard warriors I've visited. The experience and community relationships that our warriors have make the National Guard a truly valuable asset to the state. These are the characteristics, along with your Army and Air Force values, that make National Guardsmen attractive to potential employers.

Like the rest of the nation, the Alabama National Guard struggles with unemployment. We have hundreds of well-trained Soldiers and Airmen, many of whom have deployed, who are unemployed or underemployed. I've been pushing

my staff hard to do all we can to ensure that this issue is dealt with head-on.

While we are trying to do all we can to help our Soldiers and Airmen find valuable employment, you should remember that personal responsibility is another of those warrior characteristics that employers find attractive. If you are unemployed, take the initiative; look at the back of this issue and learn about the opportunities and tools that are available to you. Brush up on your interview skills, rework your resume, pursue more education or job training. (Please see *SKILLS*, page 7)

State Command Sergeant Major

Developmental counseling is an obligation of leaders



**Command Sgt.
Maj.
Eddie Pike**

Developmental counseling is a type of communication that leaders use to empower and enable Soldiers. It is much more than providing feedback

or direction. It is communication to help develop a Soldier's ability to achieve individual and unit goals. Leaders counsel Soldiers to help them be

successful. Effective developmental counseling is one way Soldiers learn and grow. Leaders owe their Soldiers the best possible road map to success. Leaders help their soldiers solve problems by guiding them to workable solutions through effective counseling.

Developmental counseling is subordinate-centered communication that outlines actions necessary for Soldiers to achieve individual goals and objectives. It is vital that all leaders conduct professional growth counseling with their Soldiers to develop the leaders of the fu-

ture. Subordinate-centered, two way communications is simply a style of communication where subordinates are not passive listeners, but a vital contributor in the communication process. Subordinate participation is absolutely necessary when leaders are attempting to develop and not simply impart direction or advice.

Some Soldiers may perceive counseling as an adverse action, perhaps because that is their experience. Developmental counseling most definitely is not supposed to be an adverse action. (Please see *COUNSELING*, page 7)

Snap Shots

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



Contributed/photo

20th Special Forces Group Soldiers parachute to the ground during airborne operations training in Gadsden, April 29.



Brenda Thomas/photo

Wetumpka native Darlene Cowsert presents a watercolor painting by local artist Phillip Andrews to Alabama National Guard Adjutant General Perry G. Smith on the U.S. Army's 237th birthday. The painting depicts the Alabama Guard's involvement in building Wetumpka's Gold Star Park in 1976.



Contributed/photo

Command Sgt. Maj. Pike presents Command Sgt. Maj. J.D. Miller, 122nd Recruiting and Retention Battalion Command Sergeant Major, with his Certificate of Appointment to Command Sergeant Major in the U.S. Army in May.



Eric Roberts/photo

Soldiers of the 152nd Military Police Company stand in formation during their deployment ceremony in Hartselle, Ala., June 24, 2012. The 152nd is deploying to Southwest Asia.



Jamie Brown/photo

Soldiers of D Company, 1/167th Infantry Battalion, stand in formation as they prepare to enter a departure ceremony held in Sylacauga, Ala., June 22, 2012. The 1/167th is mobilizing approximately 600 Soldiers to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.



Brenda Thomas/photo

Members of the Alabama National Guard stand by Governor Robert Bentley as he signs House Bill 238, sponsored by Rep. DuWayne Bridges (R-Valley), which sets a perimeter of 1000 feet (two blocks) for any disruption of a funeral in Alabama. The bill is aimed at restricting the protests of funerals for fallen Soldiers and other victims.



Brenda Thomas/photo

Soldiers of HHC and E Company, 1/167th Infantry Battalion, salute our nation's flag during their deployment ceremony in Talladega, Ala., June 21, 2012. The 1/167th is mobilizing approximately 600 Soldiers to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.



Eric Roberts/photo

Brig. Gen. David Brown meets with Soldiers of the 152nd Military Police Company during their deployment ceremony in Hartselle, Ala., June 24, 2012. The 152nd is deploying to Southwest Asia.



Jamie Brown/photo

Soldiers of A Company, 1/167th Infantry Battalion, gather with family and friends at a deployment ceremony at West Point Lake, Ga. June 22, 2012. The 1/167th is mobilizing approximately 600 Soldiers to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

(SKILLS continued from page 2)

-ing in a new skill. Remember that you are in charge of your future.

I know that we have a resilient force, a group of trained, proficient warriors ready to take the fight to the enemy overseas, ready to respond to disaster at home and ready to contribute to

(COUNSELING continued from page 2)

action. Regular developmental counseling is an important tool for developing future leaders at every level. Regular effective counseling helps all soldiers become better members of the team, maintain or improve performance, and prepare them for the future. It also instills discipline and confidence in soldiers as they know their leaders care about their future.

our communities through civic participation, volunteerism and working valuable jobs. I know that being a Citizen-Soldier or Airman is a task that requires balance and often seems like a juggling act. I thank you for your dedication to your country and your communities and

Leaders conduct counseling to assist soldiers in achieving and developing personal, professional development and organizational goals, and to prepare them for increased responsibility. Leaders are responsible for developing soldiers through teaching, coaching, and counseling. This is done effectively by identifying weaknesses, setting goals, developing and imple-

for remaining optimistic even in these tough economic times. Remember that what makes you a good Guardsman also makes you a good employee. Hang tough and do what I know you can do – be great citizens and great warriors. Lead from the front!

menting a plan of action, and providing oversight and motivation throughout the process. Leaders are responsible for everything their units do or fail to do. Leaders are responsible for all military actions. Inherent in that responsibility is the duty to develop subordinates and make them ready to lead.

Employment Assistance Network



The Alabama National Guard has partnered with many military-friendly agencies to provide you with the most updated and pertinent information on job searching and employment preparation.

Unemployed Guardsmen should visit the Employment Assistance Network to register and receive a personal counselor who will help you find employment.

Visit the EAN at <http://www.al.ngb.army.mil/EAN>.

Our partnerships include:

CDL School for Military
Ryder
Verizon
Amazon.com
PlaneTechs
PCH Hotels and Resorts
Dow Corning
...and many more.



Photo by Sgt. Roy Henry, 124th MPAD

The Department of Defense MWR Library Program and Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program provide online tutoring and homework help from Tutor.com at no charge to students in National Guard, Reserve and Active Duty military families, regardless of deployment status. Tutor.com for Military Families allows students to connect to a live tutor online at any time for help™

Birmingham based Green Berets get new commander

by Spc. Brenda Thomas
Public Affairs Office

The Alabama National Guard's 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne) welcomed Col. James D. Craig as the new brigade commander in a ceremony June 2, 2012 at the group's headquarters in Birmingham, Ala. Craig took over command from Col. Randall M. Zeegers who had commanded the 20th SFG(A) since June 2009.

Zeegers has been named the Deputy Commanding General of the United States Army Special Forces.

"A commander can only be as successful as those who carry out his vision," said Zeegers to the Soldiers of the 20th SFG(A). "You have my greatest respect and lifelong devotion."

Wearing the Special Forces' signature green beret, Craig addressed the assembled Soldiers of the

20th.

"I look forward to serving with you all," he said. "We will continue to build on the efforts and the service of those who served before us."

The 20th SFG(A) is one of only two Special Forces Groups in the National Guard. The 20th SFG(A) has one battalion stationed in Alabama, and has command and control over two additional battalions, one in Mississippi and the other in Florida. In total, 20th SFG(A) commands and controls Special Forces units in eight separate states.

"We don't select just anybody to command at the

brigade level," said Maj. Gen. Perry G. Smith, Alabama's Adjutant General. "You must prove that you have the potential to serve at this level by performing well and leading professionally."



Brenda Thomas/photo

Maj. Gen. Perry G. Smith, Alabama's Adjutant General, hands the 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne) colors to Col. James D. Craig, the new 20th SFG(A) Commander, during a change of command ceremony.



Brenda Thomasphoto

Members of the 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne) stand in formation during a change of command ceremony.