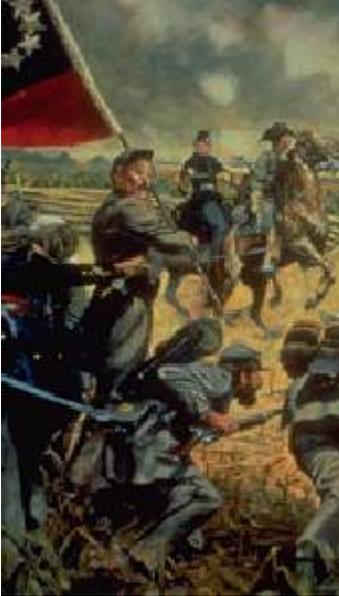


# The Alabama National Guard

## The Alabama Guard's Heritage and Tradition Emerges...



On the morning of July 21, 1861, the Union Army under the command of Brig. Gen. Irvin McDowell, in an effort to cripple the newly assembled Confederate Army at Manassas, Virginia, fired the opening shots of the first major battle of the Civil War. Both armies were largely made up of volunteer militia with regiments of both sides wearing blue and gray uniforms. The brunt of the Union attack fell on the Confederate left flank. Confederate Brig. Gen. Bernard Bee, having recently resigned from the U. S. Army and still wearing his blue uniform, realized that the army's left flank was seriously exposed. Gen. Bee ordered the Fourth Alabama to advance rapidly in order to plug the gap in the Confederate line. For over an hour, the Fourth Alabama held its position and repulsed several Union regiments. The gallant stand of the Fourth Alabama stalled the Union advance and gave the Confederate forces more time to regroup. The regiment played a prominent part in the fighting all day and contributed to the Confederate victory. The Battle of First Manassas proved to both sides that the Civil War would be a bitterly contested struggle. The Fourth Alabama went on to fight in every major battle in the Eastern Theater of the Civil War and never surrendered its colors. **The heritage and traditions of the Fourth Alabama are carried on by the 1st Battalion, 167th Infantry, Alabama Army National Guard.**  
*source: Official archives at the "National Guard Bureau"*

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After the Civil War, the National Guard began taking steps to become a modern reserve to the Army - this included additional funding, training and equipment.

The Militia Act of 1903 prescribed Federal standards for the Guard. These new standards meant that the Guard was to be organized, trained and equipped according to regular Army standards.

By the time World War I came around, the National Guard was unstoppable. Guard divisions saw more action than any other Army component. In fact, the German General Staff noted that of the eight American divisions considered being superior, six were from the National Guard.

The roaring twenties brought about the formation of 29 Air Corps squadrons, laying the foundation for today's Air National Guard.

In 1933, Congress authorized the creation of the National Guard of the U.S. (consisting of all National Guard units), that could be ordered into Federal Service by the president.

Anticipation World War II, President Roosevelt ordered the National Guard of the U.S. into Federal service for one year of accelerated training. This was to train and prepare the Guard for war. Of the first five U.S. Army divisions entering offensive combat, four were from the National Guard. 148 Guard units received the Presidential Unit Citation. Twenty Guardsmen were awarded the Medal of Honor.



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### **A Call to Action: The Vietnam War.**

From 1968-69, 12,000 Army Guardsmen and 10,511 Air Guardsmen were called to serve their country. Over 9,500 Guardsmen were sent to Vietnam. Once again, the National Guard demonstrated combat-ready professionalism, earning over 4,000 decorations during the conflict.

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### **The National Guard Today: Three Centuries old and going strong!**



The 1970's were a period of modernization for both the Army and Air National Guard. Women were allowed to join the Guard and for the first time began training in new roles - from mechanics to pilots and engineers. In addition, there was a significant rise in the number of enlisted blacks and minorities.

The Army and Air National Guard also began to acquire large quantities of the latest, up-to-date equipment. During this same period, the Army's "affiliation" program was set into motion. This program affiliated specific Army Guard battalions and brigades with active Army combat units with whom they would mobilize and deploy. This set the pace for the Army and Air National Guard of the 80's and 90's.

**Always Changing, Always Growing.**

Today, the Army and Air National Guard are the best they've ever been - well equipped and trained to handle any emergency. Whether it's demonstrating peacetime heroism within their communities - or being mobilized for a national emergency, National Guard members will continue to protect their state and country.