

THE ON GUARD

Volume XXXI, 12 NEWSPAPER of the ARMY and AIR NATIONAL GUARD January 2003

Guarding against terrorism

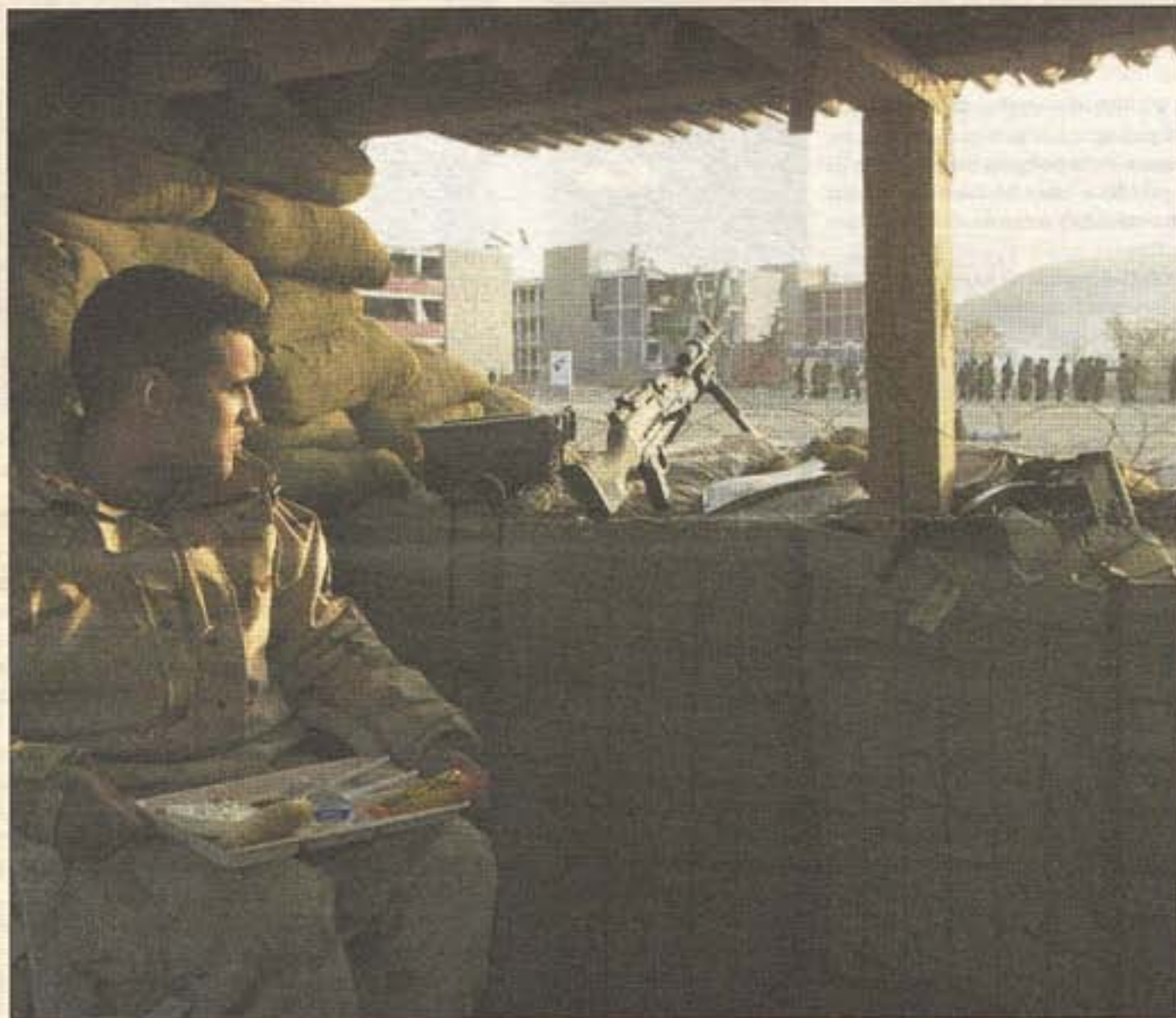


Photo by Charles Mussi, National Guard Bureau

Massachusetts National Guardsman Spc. Eric Cabral enjoys his breakfast as members from the newly formed Afghan Army begin their day at the Kabul Military Training Center in Kabul, Afghanistan. Cabral and the 772nd Military Police Company provide force protection at the base. In addition to the hundreds of Guardsmen serving in Afghanistan, thousands more serve both national and internationally fighting the war on terrorism.

Congress passes Sen. Wellstone bill

2nd Lt. Anna Lewicki

Minn. National Guard, State Public Affairs

WASHINGTON, D.C. - For the first time in history, National Guard members called to federal duty under state control are eligible to receive protections under the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act of 1940. Both the Senate and House of Representatives voted to include National Guard members in the SSCRA in certain circumstances.

During wartime call-ups, SSCRA protects active duty and reserve forces in areas like security deposits, rental agreements, evictions, interest rates, mortgage foreclosures, civil judicial proceedings and income tax payments. Previously, National Guard members were only included in SSCRA when called to federal duty under the provisions of Title 10, U.S. Code. This change means National Guard members called to state duty under federal control, or Title 32, for longer than 30 days are eligible to receive benefits from SSCRA.

Guard members were activated in Title 32 status and deployed to airports around the country for Operation Noble Eagle - in some cases for up to seven months. Lawmakers took a closer look at the provisions of SSCRA after Guard members started experiencing financial hardships due to a loss in pay and medical benefits.

The late Sen. Paul Wellstone, D-Minn., sponsored the bill before he was killed in a plane crash in October.



Wellstone

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About The On Guard

The *On Guard* is published monthly using federal funds under provisions of AR 360-81 by the Command Information Branch of the National Guard Bureau's Public Affairs Office for all members of the Army and Air National Guard. The 50,000 copies are distributed to all National Guard units and selected organizations throughout the Total Force. The views and opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Department of Defense, the Army, the Air Force or the National Guard Bureau.

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E-mail your stories to us by the 20th of each month. We prefer that photos be high-quality digital (200 dpi or more) and e-mailed to:

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A soldier's Christmas present

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

"Is it hard being in the Army?"
"What do you eat?"
"If girls go under barbed wire and their hair gets caught, what do they do?"
"Have you ever killed anyone?"
"How do you know when a war is over?"

Here's a sure-fire way to find out if you really know as much as you think you do. Try to answer the no-holds-barred questions put to you by a class of fourth-graders so that, you hope, they understand what you are talking about.

They ask basic questions like the five above faster than you can answer them because they are old enough to have a sense of the world beyond their own and young enough to not be concerned about being politically correct.

I discovered that all over again during the hour that I visited Sheila Ready's fourth-grade class at the Windsor Elementary School in central Maine on Jan. 3. I was decked out in my dress green uniform. That made me their target of opportunity for some candid questions about what it's like to be a soldier.

The news was filled with the ongoing hunt for terrorists and reports and rumors of another war with Iraq. Whatever video games these youngsters had received for Christmas had not lost their luster. And Hollywood, we all know, is still spinning its myths and magic about what soldiers do.

I had forgotten just how concerned and curious and caring a group of youngsters who are nine going on 10 can be. It's been 45 years since I was in the fourth grade, and it's been a couple of decades since my two sons and their friends were that age.

It all started with the nicest Christmas card I have ever received. Mrs. Ready had asked her 18 fourth graders if they knew anyone serving in the military to whom they could send a card signed by everyone in the class. My grandson, Nicolas, is in that class. He told his teacher about his "Pepe Bob" who works in Washington. The card was signed and sent to my home away from home in northern Virginia on Dec. 18.

"With our thanks for serving our country. Wishing you all the joy and wonder of Christmas. Best wishes," was the inscription that warmed my heart.

If you've ever gotten a card or a letter like this, you know what I mean. If you haven't, I hope you do. And if it doesn't melt your heart, you either don't have one or you need a new one.



Photo by Master Sgt. Bob Haskell, National Guard Bureau

These fourth graders and their teacher, Sheila Ready, far right, made this old soldier feel right at home at the Windsor Elementary School in central Maine in early January.

Since Windsor is close to my real home in Augusta, Maine, where I spent the holidays, I asked if I could thank the class in person.

Sheila Ready was a warm and gracious hostess. She understands the demands and satisfaction of military service because her husband Ron put 20 years into the Air Force before retiring as a lieutenant colonel. She grew up in Windsor, so she is comfortable in her town and with her people. She has taught fourth graders at the Windsor school for nearly six years, so she knows what triggers their impressionable minds.

She allowed as how a visit by a soldier would be a terrific learning experience for her pupils. I hope it was. I am willing to bet, however, that I learned more from them than they learned from me. All I had to do was listen to their questions.

"Was your training hard?"
"Have you been to where they are fighting a war?"
"Do you have to make your bed really tight?"
"What happens on the war-field if you get hurt?"
"How long do wars last?"

Only five of the 16 pupils present that day have parents who have served in the military. I guess that's fairly typical in this country today. But their questions made me wonder if many more of them somehow believe they will someday find themselves in uniform and on a distant field of battle.

They have, after all, become aware of a world that is increasingly hard to define because they were born after Desert Storm. There is a country with many enemies who are suspected of building weapons of mass destruction, who attack with hijacked jetliners and who hide in caves.

The Cold War, which was so easy to understand because it was the United States against the Soviet Union, will seem like ancient history to them when they learn of it - in the same way that World War II seems to me.

They don't seem to be as worried about death from nuclear holocaust, which was the fear of my Cuban-Missile-Crisis generation, as they are concerned about being wounded and left behind on a conventional field of battle.

Along with their curiosity about the mysteries of military service, Mrs. Ready's fourth graders reflected a refreshing respect for their country.

"Do you say the Pledge of Allegiance every day?" one girl asked.

"No I don't," I replied with a twinge of guilt. "But I'll bet you do."

"Yes we do," she beamed.

That seemed to get me off the hook.

However, that question, along with the card, was a poignant reminder that people do love this country and that they admire and have high expectations of those who wear the uniform in its defense.

That's the best present that any soldier can get for Christmas.



In the News

New Mexico's 150th Security Forces

The sacrifice continues

By 2nd Lt. Bruce R. Hill Jr.
150th Fighter Wing

KIRTLAND AIR FORCE BASE, N.M. — New Mexico Air National Guard members have been working alongside active duty security forces for more than a year, providing force protection to Kirtland Air Force Base, as well as other locations around the world.

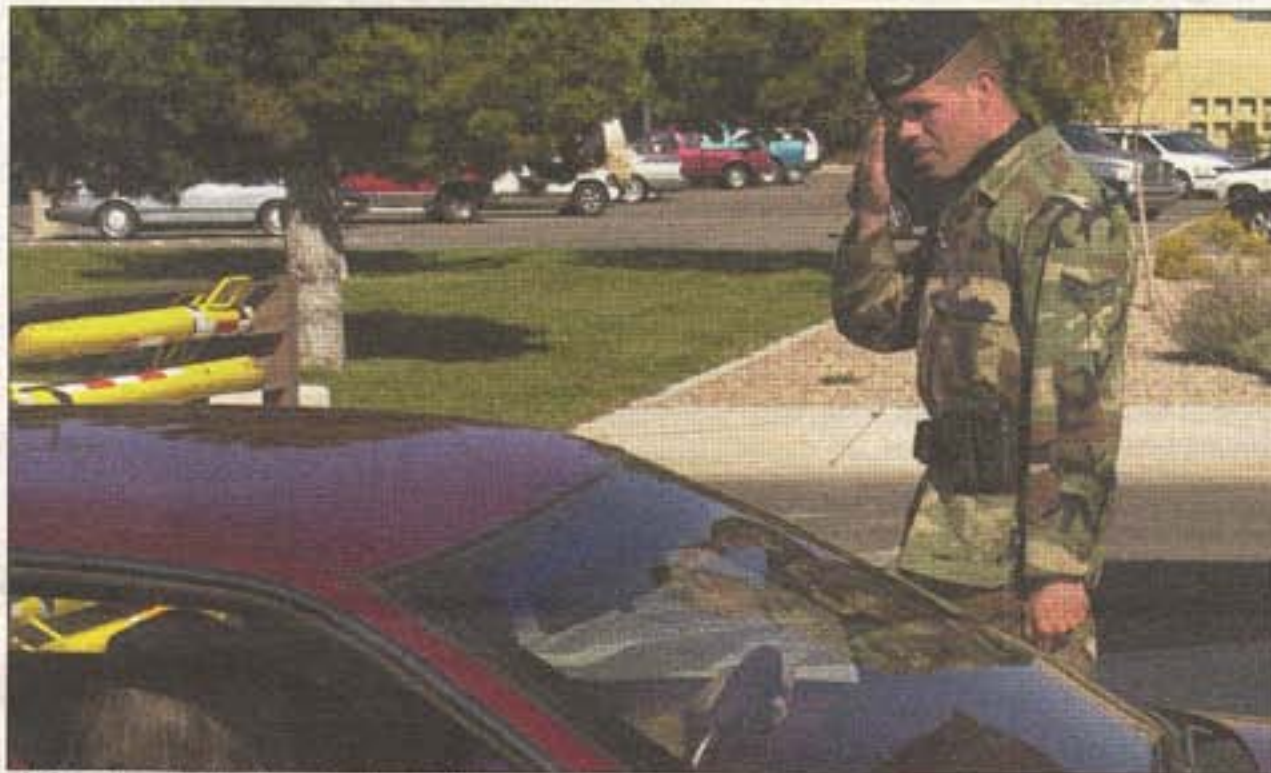
Members of the 150th Security Forces Squadron continue to sacrifice time away from their families and civilian jobs as part of a two-year call-up to serve their country.

"There are 27 security police serving on active duty here from our unit and all are traditional," said Maj. Richard Almeter, 150th security forces commander. "Thirteen more of our troops are expected to be called to active duty to serve here in another week."

"The 150th Security Forces Squadron has been on active status since the Sept. 11 attacks. One more year of active duty is planned, making this the longest call to active duty for guardsmen since WWII, exceeding that of the Vietnam War call-up, which was for one year."

The duties being performed by Air Guard troops range from patrolling and gate security to investigating crimes.

"Law enforcement capability has diminished in terms of police report writing and investigations since 9/11, and is largely what our troops have been doing for the 377th," said Almeter. "The report on our troops has also been outstanding due to thoroughness,



Senior Airman Jerome Ortiz of the 150th Security Forces Squadron salutes an officer entering Kirtland Air Force Base. Ortiz and numerous other security force personnel have been providing additional security to bases around the world for more than a year.

Photo by Senior Master Sgt. Jim Davis

clarity and professionalism of written police reports. Many of our troops have been tasked as patrol and flight supervisors as well."

"The 150th has done a great job for us," said Chief Master Sgt. Wes Hudson, security forces manager for the 377th Air Base Wing. "They've done great work, have been very professional, and have been key performers in the I.G. inspection."

"What they've been doing is no different than what the 377th security forces does

everyday. They've been working well with us like another cop in uniform. We couldn't keep a reasonable schedule and do our day-to-day job without them."

"A difference between some of the Air Guard troops and the others on active duty is that many guardsmen have civilian jobs and live outside of the local area," said Almeter. "Troops that live here at Kirtland go home at night to their loved ones. Our troops have homes in Santa Fe, Farmington ..., so when

they get off from work, they go to their hotel room and don't get to see their families until their days off."

The initial call-up was to help secure the flight line here, the secondary call-up was to support the airport, and the third call-up was in support of Noble Eagle overseas.

"The Air National Guard police have had such a high operations tempo, it has been an emotional drain, but we've managed to get the job done and do it well," Almeter said.

The American Red Cross supports Guard families

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

The fire in Julie Burger's soul about helping military families, including those in the National Guard and the five other Reserve components, burns as bright as the red in the internationally recognized Red Cross logo.

There are many reasons for her passion. She has been a volunteer for the American Red Cross and its Armed Forces Emergency Services for 35 years. Her husband, Leslie, is a physician and retired Army two-star general who formerly commanded the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

Above all, her three sons are full-time military officers. The oldest, David, is a first lieutenant in the Texas Army National Guard

on duty at the Pine Bluff Arsenal in Arkansas. And Julie Burger wants to be sure they can be contacted wherever in the world they may be serving during these challenging times, especially if this country again goes to war with Iraq.

"I am passionate about this program for professional and very personal reasons," said Burger, now a senior volunteer advisor, during a recent telephone interview from her home in Vancouver, Wash. "I want to know that my sons are being cared for. I want every service member, including our Guard and Reserve members, to know that the Red Cross is able and ready to help them and their families anywhere in the world 24 hours every day and 365 days every year."

The key, she insisted, is making sure that

the families know how to contact their local Red Cross chapter and to give them all of the information necessary for locating their service members in case of a crisis at home or in case of a financial emergency.

That is the underlying purpose for a Red Cross program called "Get to Know Us Before You Need Us." Burger explained that program to public affairs officers for the seven reserve components at the Pentagon on Jan. 8. She is pitching the program to every corporal, captain and colonel who will listen. She is also bending the ear of every general and admiral she can get to.

"We don't want National Guard and Reserve troops to wait until they're deployed, and their families have to send them a message, before they learn about the Red Cross,"

Burger insisted. "They are entitled to the same valuable Red Cross emergency services as the families of full-time military personnel."

She understands that every branch of the service, including the National Guard, has a family support program. But everyone in the military has access to the Red Cross, she added. It can be difficult, Burger explained, to find members of the Guard and Reserve, especially if they are overseas, because their families frequently do not know exactly where they are or even the units they belong to. But it does not have to be hard, she maintained. Service members can fill out a Red Cross card and leave it with their families.

For more information about the Red Cross, visit www.redcross.org, or look up a local chapter in the phone book.

A flight they will never forget

Senior Airman Kristi Schon

Minnesota Public Affairs

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. — Lieutenant Col. Steve O'Brien, a pilot and chief of standardization and evaluation with the 109th Airlift Squadron, never imagined he'd find himself in the midst of what is now considered one of the most devastating terrorist attacks in the United States' history.

What began as just another sunny day would soon become a tragic memory for O'Brien and the rest of the crew for many years to come.

The morning of Sept. 11, the crew took off from Andrews Air Force Base, Md. near Washington D.C. after completing a normal mission to the Caribbean. O'Brien and his crew began the last leg of their trip home to Minnesota.

The flight was going smoothly as the plane flew over the Mall, passing famous sites like the White House and Arlington Cemetery, and crossing the Potomac River.

Suddenly, an aircraft controller contacted the crew and asked if they could see an airplane at their 10 o'clock position. This request got O'Brien's attention because normally they rely on the controllers to let them

know where other aircraft are located and in this situation their roles were reversed.

Lieutenant Col. Joe Divito, a navigator and chief of safety for the 109th Airlift Squadron, described the aircraft as a 757, "just screaming, going left to right."

Aircraft control explained they did not have control of that aircraft and the pilot was not communicating with them.

To O'Brien's surprise, the controller then asked the crew to climb up to the same altitude and follow the commercial aircraft.

"In over 20 years of flying, I've never had a civilian air traffic controller ask us to follow another airplane," O'Brien said. "So that was really a shock to have them make that request."

As the crew matched the aircraft's path, they saw the pilot direct the plane on a sharp turn to the right and then crash directly into the Pentagon. Initially, the crew did not think the crash was an act of terrorism.

"We thought there was a problem with the airplane, because the plane was going much faster than it should have been," said Divito.

O'Brien was immediately concerned for his crew and asked everyone how they were feeling.

"Not that there is anything you can do at that point to stop what's going on but it's just a lot more comforting to be with your family. I'm sure a lot of people were leaning on their families to carry them through those strong emotions that accompany a severe situation like this."

— Lt. Col. Steve O'Brien

"After seeing something like that, I wanted to be sure everyone was able to keep their heads into what they're supposed to be doing and that is flying the airplane," O'Brien said. "At that point pretty much everyone agreed we should press on and continue back at our normal cruising altitude."

After reporting the scene to the controller, the crew asked if they should stay in the area to provide any assistance. Because fighter jets were already headed to the scene, the controller declined their support and asked them to vacate the area as quickly as possible.

"Even still, we were thinking this was an airplane in distress that had crashed, nothing more," said Divito.

The crew complied with the controller's directions and returned to their west heading. They turned on an AM radio that they kept on the airplane and for the first time, the crew realized what they might have just witnessed.

"That's when we first heard about New York," said Divito. "I thought, 'Oh my God, what did we just see here?'"

In disbelief, the crew quietly listened to the news broadcast on the radio finding no words to describe what they were feeling. They continued on their path to Minneapolis and somewhere near the Cleveland control center the crew was asked if they saw a plane at 12 o'clock. Hoping this didn't mean what they thought it did, the crew reported that they did not see the aircraft.

Then, from the back of the plane, Divito said he heard Senior Airman Robben Todd, seated near one of the rear windows yell, "Oh my God, I just saw another crash. There's another big cloud of smoke out here."

The crew continued their communication with the controller and confirmed that the crash they were reporting was in the same area where the controller had lost contact with the operators of United Flight 93. Although baffled and shocked, the crew did not know what else to do and again continued towards home.

"Everything was just really quiet," Divito said. "The controllers weren't handling the volume of flights they normally do and we were just dealing with them individually as we went from sector to sector."

Finally, one of the controllers started talking to the crew.

"He wasn't sure if he should be telling us anything, but he explained that he knew we were a military aircraft and one of the only planes in the air at that time," said Divito. "He said all other aircraft had been ordered to the ground."

The controller then asked the crew where they were headed and they responded they were on their way home to Minneapolis. Realizing they should not complete their trip home, the crew contacted the nearest air station and landed at Youngstown Air Reserve Base in Vienna, Ohio.

After they were on the ground and had finished debriefing intelligence specialists and Federal Bureau of Investigation agents about what they had seen, the crew sat down to watch television in their rooms and try to find out what had exactly happened that day.

"They were showing some footage of the crash site in Pennsylvania and I was thinking, 'Yep, that's what I was looking at,'" O'Brien recalled.

The crew ended up staying in Ohio for two days before returning home to their family and friends in Minneapolis.

While the nation was going through one of the biggest crises it has ever faced, one of the toughest situations the crew dealt with was being so far from home.

"Not that there is anything you can do at that point to stop what's going on but it's just a lot more comforting to be with your family," said O'Brien. "I'm sure a lot of people were leaning on their families to carry them through those strong emotions that accompany a severe situation like this."

The memories of what the crew saw that day will likely stay with each of them for a lifetime. "To this day it is something I will never forget. Being in an aircraft so far above all the damage made me realize how devastating the whole ordeal must have been for the people down on the streets of New York or Washington D.C.," Divito said.

Crew members Divito, Todd, and Master Sgt. Jeff Rosenthal, flight engineer; Tech. Sgt. Corey Berg, crew chief; Master Sgt. Steve Stafford, loadmaster and Tech. Sgt. Tony Pacheco, maintenance specialist, also served 110-day tours in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

While on rotation to provide air support to the Army by transporting both people and supplies, Divito and Rosenthal put in nearly 300 hours of flight time. Considering a normal flying average would be closer to 60 hours, it is clear that the workload on this tour of duty was fierce.

Despite the long days and constant flight assignments, Divito saw value and purpose in being a part of the Operation Enduring Freedom effort.

As Divito explained, the time he spent in the desert was important to him because, "I felt like I had a personal motivation for offering my support, having been a witness to what happened that day."



Photo by Kristi Schon

Lt. Col. Steve O'Brien of the 109th Airlift Squadron and his C-130 crew witnessed two of the four crashes that occurred on Sept. 11, 2001.

Air National Guard: A year in review

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

There's nothing like some public praise from the boss to make an organization feel good about what it's doing. That's what the men and women of the 108,500-member Air National Guard, including their new three-star director, got from Vice President Richard Cheney as 2002 came to a close.

"President Bush asked me to please give you his personal thanks for the fantastic job you've done for all of us over the course of the last year and a half," Cheney told 1,200 people at the Air Guard's Senior Leadership Conference in Denver, Colo., on Dec. 2.

That pat on the back, Cheney reminded them, came from George W. Bush, "the former commander-in-chief of the Texas National Guard and the first Air National Guard veteran ever to live in the White House."

"Today, there are nearly 11,000 mobilized and volunteer members of the Air National Guard serving at home or overseas," Cheney pointed out. "Air National Guard pilots fly three-quarters of the combat air patrols defending the United States mainland, you provide 40 percent of our airlift capacity in Afghanistan, and 42 percent of the fighters in our air expeditionary force. Between Sept. 11th of 2001 and Sept. 11th of this year, Air Guard pilots flew 46,000 sorties."

"As members of the National Guard you may not be full-time soldiers, but you are full-time patriots," added the vice president, who served as secretary of defense during the 1991 Persian Gulf War with Iraq. "You live your lives for the sake of your nation and your fellow Americans."

One of the full-time patriots, Lt. Gen. Daniel James III, became the Air Guard's 11th director on June 3, succeeding Maj.

Gen. Paul Weaver, Jr., who retired the previous fall.

James is the first African-American to take on the job, coincidentally during the National Guard's Year of Diversity and after serving as adjutant general for Texas since November 1995. He is also the first Air Guard director to hold three-star rank.

"I'm proud of Dan James, and I'm proud of the wisdom of our nation to select him for this job," said a long-time friend, Gen. Hal Hornburg, commander of the Air Force's Air Combat Command.

The nation got to know another Air Guard officer, Maj. Charles Moose, in his full-time capacity as police chief for Montgomery County in Maryland. He gained international acclaim as head of the multi-agency task force that hunted and caught the two suspected snipers, who were charged with multiple murders after terrorizing the Washington, D.C., area in October.

People magazine named him one of the year's 25 most intriguing people. Moose commands the District of Columbia's 113th Security Forces Squadron of the 113th Wing at Andrews Air Force Base, Md.

"You clearly demonstrate the aspect of the citizen-soldier that we often overlook," Maj. Gen. Raymond Rees, acting chief of the National Guard Bureau, told Moose as the Guard celebrated its 366th birthday on Dec. 13. "It is our citizen-soldiers, who provide leadership for our communities as well as for our armed forces."

The Air Guard embraced the idea of leadership in other ways during 2002.

Dozens of members of Air Guard security force squadrons from across the country became instructors at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, where the Air Force trains its own police force to guard its people, its

installations and its aircraft around the world.

The Air Guard was asked to help after Air Force Secretary James Roche authorized training more than 1,300 additional security forces personnel, including members of the Air Guard last year. The Guard instructors, many of them seasoned civilian police officers, such as Los Angeles Detective Dennis Cicioni, began six-month tours of duty in February.

"Our security forces people have been working 12-hour shifts since Sept. 11th," observed one Air Force training squadron commander. "The faster we get new people trained up, the faster that morale and retention will be improved. It's all tied together."

The Air Guard also showed it is more serious than ever about developing junior enlisted leaders by training the largest class in its 55-year history at its own Airman Leadership School. Airman leadership is the entry-level program for all enlisted people in the Air Force components before they become first-line supervisors.

About 142 senior airmen, including 22 members of the active Air Force and Air Force Reserve, graduated from the five-week residential course at the I.G. Brown Training and Education Center in Knoxville, Tenn., on Dec. 19.

That was about three times the size of the seven airman leadership classes that pass through the busy center every year, said Chief Master Sgt. Patricia McMerty, who plans to increase the size of those classes this year.

Air Guard leaders also took advantage of the chance to train some 170 brand new airmen at one time. The largest single class of Air Guard recruits in about 20 years finished basic military training at Lackland in

December.

Meanwhile, public relations efforts by the 193rd Special Operations Wing based in Harrisburg, Pa., is an example of how the Air Guard is striving to better explain to taxpayers and potential recruits just what it does.

The 193rd is the only wing in the entire Air Force that conducts psychological warfare missions by broadcasting radio and television messages and music from EC-130 airplanes to people in combatant areas.

After many years of conducting its mission in virtual secrecy, the Pennsylvania wing was the only U.S. special operations outfit that the Defense Department permitted to tell its story and take media representatives on missions over Afghanistan, while engaged in the war on terrorism last year.

"This was an excellent opportunity to demonstrate what we're capable of doing and how effectively we do it," said Brig. Gen. Steven Speer, the wing's commander, last May.

By then, the traveling public had seen hundreds of Air Guard members safeguarding 442 civilian airports across the country before that mission ended in May.

Nearly 800 Air Guard members were assigned to the airport security details beginning in December 2001 after President Bush asked for additional help for the holiday season.

"This has gone extremely well. There was a lot of competition to do this mission, so we were able to select the best troops," said Army Guard Lt. Col. David Green, who coordinated the Guard's security force in New Mexico. "It has certainly boosted the National Guard's image."

TRICARE offers benefits to National Guard members

ARLINGTON, Va. — Demobilized members of the reserve component and their dependents, who were activated in support of a contingency operation are eligible for the TRICARE transitional health care demonstration project. (Does not include full-time National Guard duty.)

Family members of reserve component members ordered to active duty for more than 30 days under 10 U.S.C. or 32 U.S.C. are eligible for TRICARE.

Members of the reserves and National Guard who are called to active duty will be eligible for health care benefits under TRICARE, just as other active-duty service members are.

Their families will also become eligible for TRICARE benefits, if the military sponsor's active-duty orders are for a long-enough period of time.

Families of members called to active duty in response to the Sep 11, 2001, terrorist attacks are eligible for enhanced benefits under the

TRICARE Reserve Family Demonstration Project.

TRICARE eligibility for the military sponsor begins on the effective date of their orders to active duty. Needed care will be provided by uniformed services medical treatment facilities, and by authorized civilian health care providers.

Families of activated reservists and National Guard members become eligible for health care benefits under TRICARE Standard or TRICARE Extra on the first day of the military sponsor's active duty, if his or her orders are for a period of more than 30 consecutive days of active duty, or if the orders are for an indefinite period.

TRICARE Standard is the former CHAMPUS program with a new name. Benefits under TRICARE Standard are the same as they were for CHAMPUS.

For active-duty families, TRICARE Standard pays 80 percent of the TRICARE allowable charge for covered health care

services that are obtained from authorized, non-network, civilian health care providers. Those who receive the care are legally responsible for the other 20 percent of the allowable charge, plus other charges billed by "non-participating" providers, up to the legal limit of 15 percent above the allowable charge.

Providers who "participate" in TRICARE accept the TRICARE allowable charge as the full fee for the care they provide.

Persons who use TRICARE Standard or Extra pay annual deductibles for outpatient care of \$150 for one person, and \$300 for a family (for active-duty military sponsors who are E-4 and below, the amounts are \$50 for one person, and \$100 for a family).

TRICARE Extra features discounted cost-shares (15 percent of negotiated fees) when TRICARE network providers are used, but it's only available in the same geographic areas as the HMO-type health care option, TRICARE Prime.

Families of reserve/National Guard members who are called to active duty for 179 days or more may enroll in TRICARE Prime or may be eligible for TRICARE Prime Remote.

But enrollment forms must be completed, and military medical facilities and/or TRICARE Prime network providers must be used.

Activated reservists/National Guard members should check with their reserve centers or unit commanding officers to make sure that all information about themselves and their family members is current and accurate in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) data base.

If you're an activated reservist or National Guard member, you can get more information about TRICARE by writing to the TRICARE Management Activity, 16401 E. Centretech Pkwy., Aurora, CO 80011-9043.

You can also get information from the TRICARE web site (www.tricare.osd.mil).

Supporting the Nation's Guard and Reserve

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell

National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. — Air National Guard Master Sgt. Bob Krenke talks about America's civilian employers and the reservists who work for them with all of the passion of a television evangelist.



Krenke

Furthermore, Krenke and other people, such as Dorothy Ogilvy-Lee, speak from experience when they maintain that employers and the general public will again rally around this country's reserve troops should there be a major mobilization for another war with Iraq.

Krenke, after more than five years, is one of the old hands at the office of the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve in Arlington, Va.

Bobby Hollingsworth, a retired Marine Corps Reserve two-star general and former commercial airline pilot, took charge of the program, commonly referred to as ESGR, in November 2001.

Ogilvy-Lee has been chief of Family Programs for the National Guard Bureau in Arlington since 1984. She has nurtured the program's growth from the cradle to adulthood during Desert Storm and through many other deployments that now include duty for homeland security and the war against terrorism.

"September 11, 2001, was certainly a patriotic call to arms," Krenke said. "Employers were clamoring to find out what they could do to help their Guard and Reserve workers. I just can't see any major repercussions if we go to war with Iraq."

"People would come out of the woodwork to support this next effort," Ogilvy-Lee said. "I feel very secure that the local people will rally around our troops and their families."

There is little doubt that these two programs have come of age during the dozen years of non-stop deployments since Guard and Reserve troops began being mobilized for Desert Shield in August 1990 and for Desert Storm duty the following year.

ESGR, established by a presidential proclamation in 1972, has matured into an organization of 4,200 community volunteers, who are advocates for the 1994 Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Act (USERRA) that outlines the rights and responsibilities of reservists and employers.

Family Programs provides information about military benefits and privileges, as well as assistance, for the fam-

The man from Wisconsin absolutely loves the way that civilian business executives and supervisors have stepped up to make up the differences in pay and to help in other ways their workers who have been called for duty with the National Guard and other reserve components during the 16 months since terrorists attacked the homeland.



Photos by Master Sgt. Bob Haskell, National Guard Bureau

Dorothy Ogilvy-Lee, chief of Family Programs for the National Guard Bureau, believes the public would again rally around Guard members and their families during another major mobilization.

ilies of Army and Air Guard members who are called to active duty.

It is well that they are up to speed, because these organizations address two critical concerns for the men and women, who need to focus on their military duties when they are called to arms.

They need to know their families are being cared for. And they need to know they can return to their civilian jobs.

"Re-employment and financial security are family issues, too," said Ogilvy-Lee. "The families, including the children, need to know that their soldiers or airmen can go back to their civilian jobs after they have completed their military duties."

Members of the reserve forces now live with the idea that they could be called up for six months to two years to support the active services. Most of them consider that prospect as either going with the territory or part of the adventure.

The numbers don't lie. Guard members and Reservists served on active duty for an average of a million days a year 10 years ago, when that force was 22 percent larger. Now the country's 1.3 million reservists contribute 13 million duty days each year to active component missions and exercises. That's equal to 35,000 people or two Army divisions.

People affiliated with the family and employer support programs have their own ways of defining how and why they are prepared for another mobilization.

Ogilvy-Lee maintains that the colonels and majors and senior sergeants now leading the country's Guard units have matured in the system that has become just as con-

cerned about families as it is with beans and bullets.

That awareness has grown significantly since the challenging days of Desert Shield and Desert Storm, when more than 398 Army Guard units were mobilized, 12,404 Air Guard members took part from 51 of the 54 states and territories.

"We have precedents now," Ogilvy-Lee said. "Our new leaders have grown up with Family Programs. They know they can't leave families on their own. They understand that taking care of families is part of being in their units."

"The challenge now is to seek out the high-risk families who need special help because they are isolated or having an especially difficult time dealing with their situations."

"Most families can function well when they are prepared with good information and a support system and when they get assistance from the military community when it's needed," Ogilvy-Lee said.

"When we got into Desert Shield, we had to deal with a lot of families, who never thought their Guard members would have to go to war," she recalled. "Now we can look for the special cases, who need help with their finances or who have to care for parents who are ill. I don't want anybody falling through the cracks."

ESGR, meanwhile, is gauging its success by the increased number of queries received from reservists and employers since Sept. 11, 2001, and in the ways that people have offered to help.

The ombudsmen at the Arlington office, who provide information, counseling and mediation about complying with the employment rights law, averaged 150 calls per

See SUPPORT On Page 7

2002: A year of the Army National Guard

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell

National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. — The Army National Guard began coming to grips with its future as part of the Army's lighter, leaner and more lethal force at the same time that its tried and true warrior assets were being employed in the war against global terrorism and homeland defense.

Such was the big picture in 2002 for this country's force of 350,000 Army Guard soldiers, 35,000 of whom were contributing to the war against terrorism on the last day of 2002.

It was announced that day, that some 800 Virginia troops would be mobilized for a year of force protection duty at military installations in Virginia, Washington, D.C., and Maryland.

It was also a significant year for heroes, including two Special Forces soldiers who gave their lives for their country while serving in Afghanistan.

Secretary of the Army Thomas White announced in early September that four Army Guard armor brigades, beginning in 2008, would turn in their tanks and be converted into more mobile infantry brigades and multi-functional divisions with lighter vehicles that can be used at home or abroad.

The units will be "first and foremost war-fighting formations that are prepared for the full-spectrum of operations that range from major combat to our duty here in the homeland," White assured delegates attending the National Guard Association of the United States' annual conference in Long Beach, Calif.

"The tanks we're turning in wouldn't go to war anyway. I just want you to know that the Army Guard will be part of the transformation," said Lt. Gen. Roger Schultz, the Army Guard's director, who endorsed the long-range plan.

Meanwhile, hundreds of Special Forces soldiers from the Army Guard's 19th and 20th Groups were serving on the front lines in the harsh desert and mountainous terrain of Afghanistan.

They employed their time-honored skills to help hunt down suspected terrorists and

search for stores of weapons, to help train a new Afghan army and to provide comfort to that country's people.

"For the first time since the Korean War, a brigade-size National Guard unit has deployed and engaged in active combat operations, under fire, in action against an armed enemy," said Maj. Gen. Raymond Rees, acting chief of the National Guard Bureau, as the Guard celebrated its 366th birthday on Dec. 13.

"Between two-thirds and three-quarters of all Army Special Forces in Afghanistan right now are National Guard," Rees added. "They are training our friends and allies. And they are fighting our enemies."

Some paid the ultimate price — with their lives. Colorado Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Romero and West Virginia Sgt. Gene Vance were killed in Afghanistan last April and May, respectively. Vance, who was shot during a patrol, was reported to be the first Army Guard soldier killed in direct combat since 1969.

Elsewhere, Army Guard soldiers from many states, including Maryland and Rhode Island, in January began guarding and caring for accused terrorists being detained at a new camp constructed at the Guantanamo Bay Naval Station in Cuba.

"I think the National Guard, for a century, was sort of the unseen, unsung heroes. It participated in all of our wars and did extraordinarily well," said Maryland Congressman Wayne Gilchrest, while visiting the camp in January. "The fact that [it] is much more high profile lends an enormous degree of legitimacy to the National Guard."

Other Guard soldiers were honored while the world's attention was focused on the XIX Winter Olympics in and around Salt Lake City, Utah, last February.

Utah Spc. Jill Bakken won a gold medal by driving the United States to victory in the first two-woman bobsled competition ever held during the Winter Games.

Virginia Spc. Doug Kohn and Oregon Spc. Dan Steele earned bronze medals as part of a four-man bobsled team.

Vermont Spc. Jeremy Teela placed an impressive 14th in the Games' first biathlon

race for men and finished 20th and 23rd in the next two races.

Vermont Staff Sgt. Kristina Sabasteanski, another biathlete, was one of eight U.S. athletes, who carried the American flag recovered from the World Trade Center following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks into the hushed Olympic Stadium during the opening ceremony.

On a related note, two-time Olympic biathlete and Minnesota Guard soldier Kara Salmela was honored in Arlington, Va., last March as the U.S. Army's top female athlete for 2001.

"The safety and success of these games were in part due to the participating and tireless efforts of the National Guard," said Mitt Romney, president and chief executive officer of the Salt Lake Organizing Committee. "We thank the men and women of the National Guard," added Romney of the nearly 5,000 Guard members from 25 states, who supported the massive security operation."

Many people expressed their gratitude to Guard soldiers who helped keep the homeland safe in 2002.

"I want to express my appreciation to the National Guard men and women in the airports. Their presence should be intimidating to the wrong people, but they have been so friendly and helpful to the general public," said one civilian frequent flyer as Guard troops ended their security vigils at 442 commercial airports last May.

By then, some 1,500 primarily Army Guard troops had stepped up for six months to help overworked U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and U.S. Customs Service officers staff points of entry along the Canadian and Mexican borders. They searched vehicles for explosives, drugs and other contraband.

"Everyone was sensitive about militarizing the border," said Ramon Juarez, INS chief for the San Antonio district in Texas. "But when people drive across the border, they see these soldiers in their camouflage uniforms. Then they think that if the military is involved, this country must mean business."

The Guard also meant business when it came to its more traditional domestic duties

of helping civil authorities combat the forces of nature, the wildfires and floods that ravage the land each year.

About 650 Oregon troops were on state active duty in late July, using helicopters with water buckets and shovels to help subdue and mop up five of the wildfires that had scorched some 233,000 acres in that state.

Tropical Storm Isidore and Hurricane Lili meant work for many Louisiana troops in late September and early October. And, in December, more than 200 North Carolina soldiers rolled out to check on residents in 20 counties following a killer ice storm and over 600 reported for duty in Guam, which was devastated by Super Typhoon Pongsona.

It was a roller coaster year for Army Guard leaders.

Brigadier Gen. Clyde Vaughn was named the Army National Guard's deputy director in September, succeeding Brig. Gen. Michael Squier, who had held that post since March 1998.

Major Gen. H Steven Blum relinquished command of the Virginia Army Guard's 29th Infantry Division to become chief of staff of the new Northern Command that was activated on Oct. 1 as the single unified military command responsible for defending the continental United States.

On Jan. 6, 2003, President George Bush nominated Blum to become the next chief of the National Guard Bureau. After confirmation, he will succeed Lt. Gen. Russell Davis, who retired on Sept. 1.

African-American Brig. Gen. Julia Jeter Cleckley vowed to help others follow in her footsteps after being promoted from full colonel to flag rank during the National Guard's Year of Diversity.

The untimely death of Col. Willie Davenport, five-time Olympian and 1968 gold-medal hurdler, from a heart attack on June 17 stunned the National Guard family during the year that other Army Guard soldiers distinguished themselves in Olympic arenas at home and on battlefields far away.

The year 2002 may have been roller coaster ride for the Army National Guard, but through it all they achieved their missions.

FROM PAGE 6

Support

week before Sept. 11, officials said. They received more than 500 calls per week after the attacks.

Now they are getting 250-300 calls per week. The full-time ombudsman staff has been increased from three to five to handle the increased load.

"Before Sept. 11, we got calls from employers trying to get smart about the law and about their service members' rights," said Army Reserve Lt. Col. Paula Lorick. "After Sept. 11, we got many more calls from employers asking how they can help the service members and their families."

"For every 10 employers who call, only one or two express concern about excessive orders," added Lorick about the fear that employers think their reservists are spending too much time in uniform and away from work.

Business has also been brisk on the ESGR web site. The 6,200 hits per week before Sept. 11 mushroomed to 40,000 hits per week immediately afterwards. That has leveled off to 13,000 hits per week.

People most frequently click on to "Frequently Asked Questions," "Fact Sheets" and "USERRA."

The fact that 43 governors have signed statements of support for the employment law and that three more will do so shortly is another sign of success. So is the fact that major companies such as Alcoa, General Dynamics and IBM have agreed to make up the differences in pay for reservists, who earn less while on active duty.

"Desert Storm was the chance to teach a lot of people what ESGR can do and why it was important to create the new law," said Krenke. "September 11th has given us the opportunity to explain the law to a lot of employers, who are responding to the patri-

otic call. A lot of them tell us that they'll do all they can to comply with the law and then some."

(Editor's note: Additional information about Family Programs, including a mobilization checklist, can be found at web site www.defenselink.mil/ra/. Additional information about Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve can be obtained at www.esgr.org or by calling 1-800-336-4590.)

Texas Air National Guard security for



Texas Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Atalo Simmental

(Above) Staff Sgt. Cesar Prieto-Rodriguez plays the suspect for one of the troops during the handcuffing class.

(Right) Lead Instructor, Senior Master Sgt. Edward Torres-Menendez, teaches a class at Santa Clara, Iquitos, Peru.

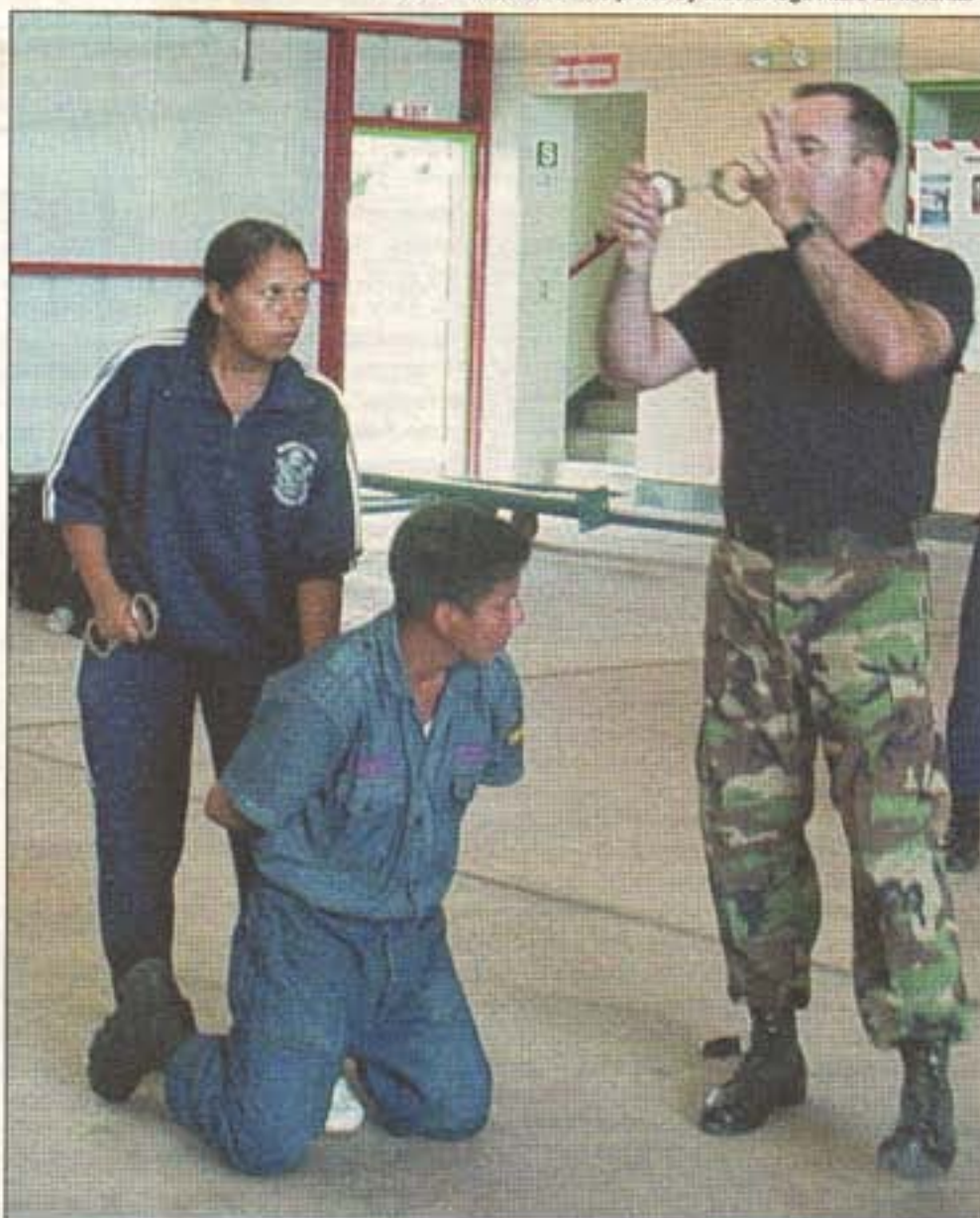


Photo by Master Sgt. Atalo Simmental



Photo by Master Sgt. Atalo Simmental
Master Sgt. J. Villanueva instructs Peruvian noncommissioned officers in proper challenging procedures.

By Senior Master Sgt. Edward Torres-Menendez

204th Security Forces

EL PASO, Texas – Who do you call when your Air Force base needs security training for protection against terrorist threats – the Texas Air National Guard's 204th Security Forces Squadron.

United States Southern Command, headquartered in Miami, Fla., provides training opportunities to enhance relationships and capabilities of U.S. and foreign national armed forces in its operating area. It provides these opportunities to Air Force units through its air component, United States Southern Air Force, headquartered at Davis-Monthan AFB in Tucson, Ariz. When USSOUTHAF needed bilingual base defense experts to participate in training missions in El Salvador, Ecuador, and Peru, it turned to the 204th for its expertise.

The squadron, commanded by Lt. Col. Daniel R. Steiner, recently returned from four-month and six-month deployments at two locations in Southwest Asia where it provided base security on the front lines in the war against terrorism. The opportunity to participate in these Central and South American training activities provided a change of pace from the unit's normal operations.

Steiner selected the 12-man team, led by Senior Master Sgt. Edward Torres-Menendez, for this mission.

"I have the utmost confidence in the skills and abilities of Sgt. Torres-Menendez," said Steiner. "He has the knowledge and expertise to teach all who will learn from his experience. The team members work well together and will adapt a training scenario to fit particular needs of any group with which they are training."

USSOUTHAF requested the unit participate in two different types of training missions; a Military Training Team (MTT) mission in Ecuador, and Deployments for Training (DFTs) in El Salvador and Peru. The primary difference between these two missions is MTTs are designed to train only foreign military forces, while DFTs are designed to provide training and interaction between both U.S. and foreign military forces.

The team first refined the squadron's training program to include all security procedures for base protection against terrorist threats. Anti-terrorism, challenging, searching of suspects and vehicles, handcuff procedures, convoys and other pertinent tactics were taught. This program builds the basic foundation for future security teams to implement advanced training.

A team member visited each prospective location and prepared a site survey that aided in the advanced planning and coordination for classrooms, supplies, transportation, communication for the team with the host

Forces train military police world-wide



Photo by Staff Sgt. Elias Rodriguez

Staff Sergeants Michael Dailey and Omar Pedraza provide instruction in tactical vehicle deployment on Eloy Alfaro Air Base, Ecuador.



Photo by Master Sgt. Atalo Simmental

(Above) Staff Sgt. Adrian Bolanos provides instruction on tactical deployment from a vehicle in El Salvador. (Right) A team prepares for a practical exercise in patrolling on Eloy Alfaro Air Base, Ecuador.

nation and respective U.S. embassies.

The three-week MTT at Eloy Alfaro Air Base in Ecuador provided training to 64 students. Training consisted of air base defense and security procedures.

The training was provided to a total of 280 students in three countries, divided into two groups. Officers and noncommissioned officers were in one group, and enlisted personnel and recruits were in the second.

"When both U.S. and Ecuadorian air forces work together, there should be no difference in the procedures utilized," said the commander of Manta Air Base, Ecuador, where seven Ecuadorian air bases were represented.

The team participated in DFTs at two locations in El Salvador and two locations in Peru. The DFTs also provided opportunities for the U.S. members to learn security practices and procedures used by the other nations.

"This is the first time that we have encountered such training to enhance the security of our base," said Comandante Christian Ames Ortiz during the closing ceremony at Santa Clara, Iquitos, Peru. "We hope that your team will come back for more training. Our doors are open."

After the team returned from the training deployment, a Brazilian team visited the squadron and inquired about the training program and how it could be modified to suit their needs. Initial training for approximately 100 men is expected to occur within the next 12 months. The Venezuela air force has also voiced interest in the training program.

In their self-assessment, members of the deployed team said the training was welcome and that further training is needed to improve their security programs. Team members included: Torres-Menendez; Master Sergeants, Atalo Simmental, assistant team leader, and Jesus Villanueva; Tech. Sergeants, Alberto Talavera, Ernest De La O, and Victor Adkins; and Staff Sergeants, Michael Dailey, Adrian Bolanos, Cesar Prieto-Rodriguez, Omar Pedraza, Elias Rodriguez and Ricardo Raygoza.

"Terrorists may attack any facility in any country," said a senior unit member. "The 204th Security Forces Squadron can train others to defend and protect against those malicious attacks."



Photo by Staff Sgt. Elias Rodriguez

Guard initiatives preserve environment and training

By Scott Woodham and Peg Moffet

National Guard Bureau Public Affairs

ARLINGTON, Va. — Safeguarding America includes protecting the land and the natural and cultural resources on Army and Air National Guard installations throughout the United States. Environmental stewardship allows those resources to be sustained for future generations and provides the Guard with quality training land needed to maintain a well-trained military force that is ready to meet any challenge, anytime, anywhere.

Community outreach is integral to the Guard's mission of protecting lives and property.

Whether it is providing potable water to Native Americans in New Mexico or building artificial reefs off the coast of South Carolina, the Guard is there to lend a helping hand.

The Guard focuses its land management efforts on four environmental pillars: compliance, restoration, pollution prevention and conservation. Here are just a few examples of Guard success stories over the past two years:

- * The 177th Fighter Wing at Atlantic City, N.J., won the Air Force General Thomas D. White Environmental Quality Award (Reserve Component) for FY 2002.

Major accomplishments include completing a Final Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan for the 9,416-acre Warren Grove Range, recycling 21,395 gallons of petroleum products and reducing hazardous materials purchase by 14 percent during the year.

- * At Camp Ripley, the Minnesota Army National Guard sponsors the Gray Wolf Project to promote the survival of the gray wolf population. The Camp Ripley natural resources team tracks and studies wolf movements over hundreds of miles by attaching Global Positioning Systems radio-collars to the gray wolves.

- * The 181st Fighter Wing in Terre Haute, Ind., applies new energy-efficient building designs and a digital control system in older buildings to reduce facility-wide energy usage by 20 percent. The 181st is the recipient of the governor's top award for pollution prevention measures in 2001.

- * The governor and legislature of Massachusetts recognized the 104th Fighter Wing, Barnes Air National Guard Base, Westfield, Mass., for cleanup and community involvement efforts. The base removed four 25,000 gallon underground storage tanks, excavated or recycled nearly 1,900 tons of fuel-contaminated soil and remediated 357 cubic yards of soil.

- * The 193rd Special Operations Wing at Harrisburg International Airport, Pa., was the first unit in the country to employ the use of ammonia wash technology, otherwise known as solvated electron technology, to remediate 250 tons of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) on site.

- * Camp Blanding, Fla., is home to more than 40 protected plant and animal species. The Florida Army National Guard's unique resource management techniques, including the creation of new cavities in trees, are protecting and replenishing the red-cockaded



Photos by Scott Woodham, National Guard Bureau

Joan Berish and Lori Wendland of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission lift a Gopher Tortoise from a "bucket trap," near its burrow on Camp Blanding. The Gopher Tortoise is listed as a species of special concern, since it co-habits with several threatened and endangered species, like the Indigo Snake. The Florida Army National Guard works closely with the fish and wildlife commission to track the health of the tortoise.

woodpecker population.

- * The Oregon Army National Guard conducted the first-ever archeological survey of training lands in Oregon, identifying 13 prehistoric sites and 39 prehistoric items such as pieces of pottery and other cultural remnants. Guard personnel accomplished the study, resulting in cost savings as well as increased awareness of cultural/historical preservation and conservation.

- * The 139th Airlift Wing at Rosecrans Municipal Airport, St. Joseph, Mo., reduced aviation fuel waste by 99 percent by reprocessing 13,750 pounds of JP-8 fuel, and increased solid waste recycling by 65 percent over two years.

- * Federal, state, and local regulatory agencies conducted 51 inspections at 32 Air National Guard installations, resulting in only two notices of violation.

- * The Arkansas Army National Guard's trail-blazing hazardous materials training course for soldiers covers pollution source reduction and elimination; procurement, handling and disposal of hazardous materials; natural and cultural resource conservation and protection; and how to conduct operations and comply with environmental laws and regulations.



(Left) 1st Lt. Chris Buckner, environmental manager for the 151st Air Refueling Wing, conducts a routine inspection of the Utah Air National Guard's above-ground JP-8 fuel tanks at Salt Lake City International Airport. (Above) Sergeant 1st Class Cecilia Chavez and 1st Sgt. Francis Cordova, 1115th Transportation Company, New Mexico Army National Guard converse with Taos Pueblo resident, Gloria Mirabel. The 1115th actively supports the Taos Pueblo community near Santa Fe by providing drinking water during periods of flooding, the Taos fiestas and the annual powwow in July. (Right) Ecologist Estevan Muldavin of the University of New Mexico and Roberto Concha, environmental compliance assessment manager for the New Mexico Army National Guard, headquartered in Santa Fe, conduct a vegetation delineation survey at Camel Tracks, a local reservation where Guard units train.





News Makers

Umbarger gets 2nd star

FORT McPHERSON, Ga. - "This is a great day for the Army and for the state of Indiana," said Gen. Larry R. Ellis, Commanding General of U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM), after pinning the second star on Brig. Gen. R. Martin Umbarger, deputy commanding general (Reserve Component), FORSCOM. The Indiana Army National Guard officer was promoted to major general in a ceremony held recently at FORSCOM headquarters in Atlanta.

"I can't tell you how much this means for you to be here today," Umbarger said to the soldiers, Department of the Army civilians and 18 family members who attended the ceremony. "Never in my wildest dreams did I think I would be standing here in FORSCOM getting the honor I received today," he said, visibly moved by the occasion.

The Indiana native joined the Army in June 1971, two years after receiving his bachelor of science degree in business from the University of Evansville.

Umbarger has been assigned to FORSCOM since May. He oversees the training, mobilization and deployment of the reserve forces in support of Army operations worldwide.

"His job requires 180 days a year, but he's here close to 300 days," Ellis said. "We appreciate the work and the effort."

Before his assignment to FORSCOM, Umbarger was the Assistant Division Commander (Training), 38th Infantry Division (Mechanized), Indiana Army National Guard in Indianapolis.

As a civilian, Umbarger is president and CEO of Roy Umbarger and Sons, Inc., an agricultural wholesale and retail business located in Bargersville, Ind.

Bass tournament ...



On Guard Staff Report

LAKE GUNTERSVILLE, Ala. - Attention all bass anglers. Do you want to know how you stack up against fishermen in the other armed forces? If so, enter the 13th Annual Department of Defense Bass Tournament held on Lake Guntersville, Ala. Mar. 30 through Apr. 4, 2003.

The team tournament is composed of two practice days followed by three days of competition. National Guard and Reserve members are eligible to compete against active/retired military dependents and DOD contractors in accordance with DODI 1000.13 and DODD 1330.4.2.

The field of competitors is limited to 200 boats and registrations are on a first come, first served basis. Those interested in the event can view the tournament website at: www.geocities.com/dodbass or contact tournament director, Hugh Jones, via e-mail at: 201stratos@msn.com or by calling (478) 953-9314.

Competitive bass fishing has been steadily growing since its inception in 1967. The Bass Anglers Sportsman Society, founded in 1968 and the largest of all competitive bass fishing organizations, has more than 50,000 anglers who regularly compete in tournaments across the nation.

According to B.A.S.S., more people fish (approximately 60 million) than play golf (24 million) and tennis (17.3 million) combined. Thirty million of those anglers target bass specifically.

One of today's top professional bass anglers, Davy Hite of Prosperity, S.C., is a former National Guardsman. The 37-year-old won the B.A.S.S. Angler of the Year title in 1997, 2001 and 2002; the BASSMASTERS Classic in 1999 and has earned more than \$800,000 over the course of his fishing career.

Alaska's new AG

ANCHORAGE, Ak. - Alaska's governor, Frank H. Murkowski, recently appointed Col. Craig Campbell to serve as commissioner and adjutant general of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. Campbell has been a military officer for the past 27 years and currently serves as vice commander of the 168th Air Refueling Wing of the Alaska Air National Guard. A former Anchorage Assemblyman, Campbell has been employed since August 2000 by the Municipality of Anchorage as executive director of the Office of Planning, Development and Public Works.

"Craig Campbell brings a depth of knowledge and experience that we need now at military and veterans affairs," Murkowski said. "As the department steps up to fulfill its new missions of homeland security and missile defense, we need a leader there who can inspire the confidence of those he leads. Craig has demonstrated solid leadership abilities over a lengthy and dedicated career in service to the nation and Alaska."

Campbell, 50, has been an Alaska resident since 1981. He served on the Anchorage Assembly from 1986-96, serving two terms as chairman. Campbell has a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Tulsa, Okla., and a master's of arts from the Naval War College in Newport, R.I. He served nine years as an officer in the US Air Force, seven years in the California ANG, and the past 11 years in the Alaska ANG.

As director of the Office of Planning, Development and Public Works under Anchorage Mayor George Wuerch, Campbell is responsible for more than 450 municipal employees in six departments, with a budget of more than \$90 million. As vice commander of the 168th Air Refueling Wing, operating out of Eielson AFB in Fairbanks, Campbell helps oversee more than 700 personnel and nine KC-135 air refueling tankers. In addition, he is an adjunct professor of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, teaching aviation and management courses at Elmendorf AFB in Anchorage.

How to protect yourself against "spam"

RJ Yagy

Technical Trainer

ARLINGTON, Va. - What to do if you receive spam at your unit: Email NCR-HELP@ngb.army.mil and notify them of the spam so they may take appropriate measures.

What is spam? Most spam is commercial advertising, often for dubious products, get-rich-quick schemes, or quasi-legal services. spam costs the sender very little to send - most of the costs are paid for by the recipient or the carriers rather than by the sender. Email spam lists are often created by scanning usenet postings, stealing internet mailing lists, or searching the web for addresses. Email spam typically costs users money out-of-pocket to receive. Many people -

anyone with measured phone service - read or receive their mail while the meter is running, so to speak. Spam costs them additional money. On top of that, it costs money for ISPs and online services to transmit spam, and these costs are transmitted directly to subscribers.

One particularly nasty variant of email spam is sending spam to mailing lists (public or private email discussion forums.) Because many mailing lists limit activity to their subscribers, spammers will use automated tools to subscribe to as many mailing lists as possible, so that they can grab the lists of addresses, or use the mailing list as a direct target for their attacks.

Should I hit "Remove"?

Remove lists don't work. Even the United

States government has noticed this: "We are also working on (spam) cases that involve claims that you can opt out, when in fact what clicking on the link to unsubscribe will do is simply verify that you have a valid e-mail address, so that you can then get lots of spam instead of a little," said Howard Beales, director of the FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection.

Don't waste your time trying to jump through the spammers' hoops. Plenty of people have documented the fact that not only do remove lists not work, they do exactly what Mr. Beales says: they verify to the spammer that your e-mail address is good, and so then they put it on the premi-

um CD and sell it to the next spammer for even more money.

It does you no good to follow the removal instructions.

What NOT to do about spam:

- Threaten violence or vandalism;
- Mailbomb the site;
- Ping-storm or SYN-flood the site;
- Hack into the site;
- Try in any way to bring the site down illegally.
- And above all else, don't use spam to fight spam. This also applies in Usenet - don't follow up to spam postings, lest your posting also become spam.

Nevada colonel gets lift from bench press

By Staff Sgt. Erick Studenicka
Nevada National Guard

NEVADA — Even when he's not armed with his M-16, one could say Nevada Army Guard Col. Frank Gonzales still packs some impressive guns.

Gonzales, 43, the deputy commander of the Nevada Army Guard, is the state recordholder



Gonzales

in the single lift bench press in the Master Men's 242-pound division. In only his second competition, Gonzales set the record of 402 pounds on Nov. 14 in Reno while competing in the World Association of

Benchers and Deadlifters (WABDL) world championships. Gonzales' record lift bettered his own existing record of 363 pounds set at the WABDL regional meet in August.

The fact Gonzales has experienced so much success in a sport he began seriously training for just one year ago astonishes even his own coach, Raul Lopez of the Elko Nevada Fitness Powerlifting team.

"I've been really amazed at Frank's progress, his strength has just shot up," Lopez said. "There is a big difference between regular lifting and powerlifting and Frank has made the transition in about five months. Frank was pretty raw and green in his first meet, but he has really come through."

Gonzales, 6-foot-3 and 240 pounds, said he was unaware of his weightlifting ability when he began his competitive training. He said his main reason for being in the gym before he began powerlifting was just to stay in shape to pass the Army Physical Fitness Test. (Gonzales scores about 285 out of 300 on his APFTs.)

"I didn't realize I had any natural talent," Gonzales said. "I just think the whole thing about being a member of the military and having to do work-outs and keep in shape and then spend the time in the gym to stay in shape - it all made sense, weightlifting was a natural fit."

"I had to do something with all of those push-ups."

Gonzales, a traditional guardsman who works as the District Manager for Sierra Pacific Power Company in the central-Nevada city of Elko, said his training follows 12-week cycles in which he follows a strict regimen of precise workouts and supplement and vitamin intake. Gonzales, who is married and has four children, said the training sessions in preparation for a competition take about 45 minutes per day.

"You work your butt off for 12 weeks and it all comes down to about one hour of competition," said Gonzales, a native Nevadan who was born in Sparks and graduated from Sierra Nevada College in Incline Village.

Gonzales said it's a moot point to ponder whether he had the natural talent to reach the Olympics had he started weightlifting sooner in his life. (Note that the bench press is not an Olympic event; Olympic weight lifting events include the snatch and the clean-and-jerk.)

"I wish I would've started earlier, you never know what may have happened, but you are so busy raising a family and working," Gonzales said. "I just came to a point where I said 'Hey, maybe I - even an old colonel - can still do this.'"

Despite his "over the hill" kidding, Gonzales said being in one's early 40s is not a handicap in the sport of powerlifting.

"Your strongest lifters are usually in their late 30s and early 40s, at that age metabolisms slow down and lifters build some mass," Gonzales said.

For a typical lifter, it takes about 10 years from the start of serious training to the point where they're getting their 'max' lifts of over 400 pounds."

"I didn't realize I had any natural talent. I just think the whole thing about being a member of the military and having to do work-outs and keep in shape and then spend the time in the gym to stay in shape - it all made sense, weightlifting was a natural fit. I had to do something with all of those push-ups."

— Col. Frank Gonzales

In the future, Gonzales should fare well as he plans to compete in the military division at USA Powerlifting Association and AAU meets, a division strictly for armed forces members.

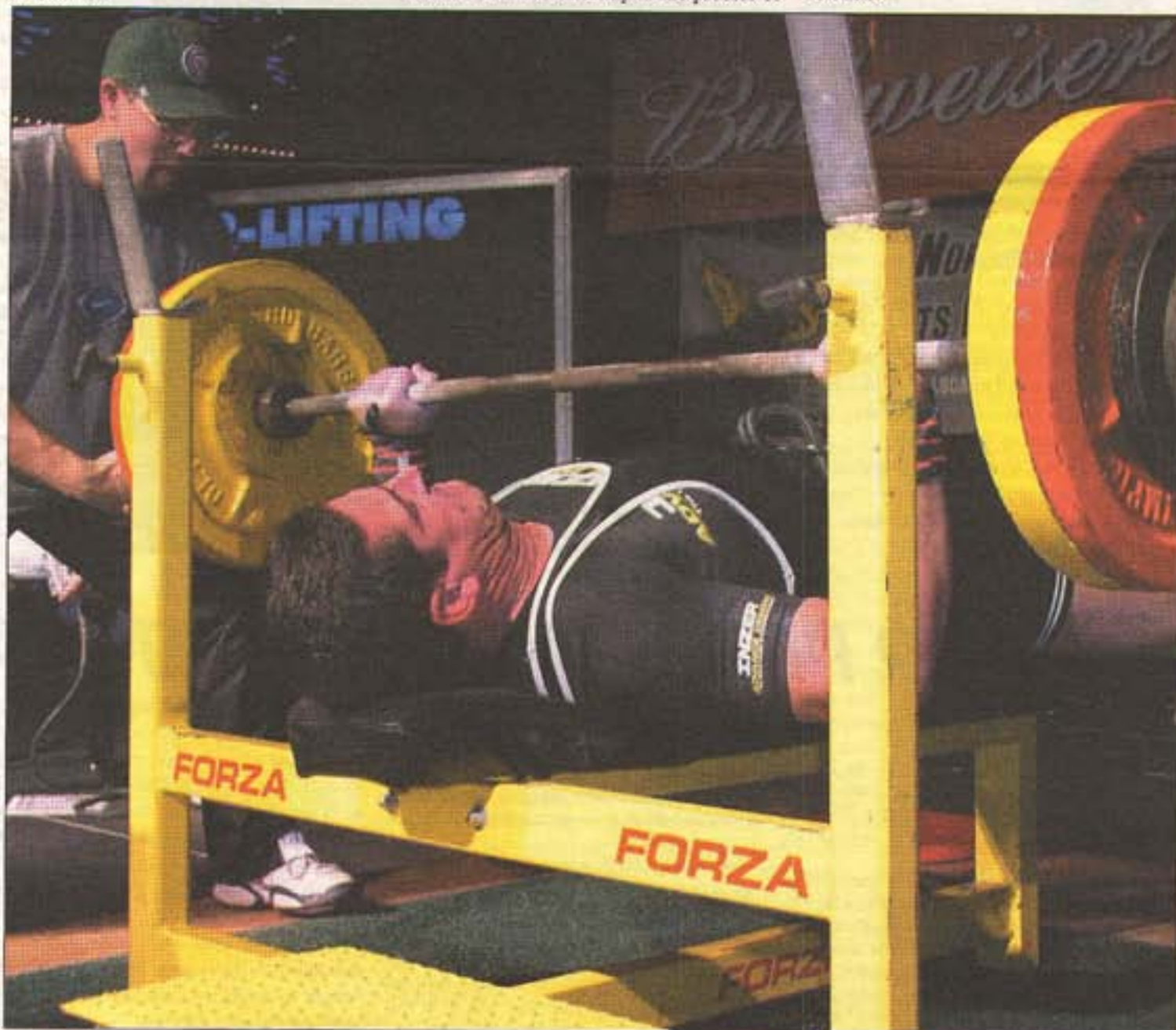
The WABDL doesn't have a military division.

Gonzales has received a presidential recommendation and is currently in the process of

receiving his U.S. Senate recommendation for eligibility for the rank of brigadier general.

If he does attain that rank, he may arguably become the strongest - at least in terms of the bench press - general officer in the Army.

"That would be a goal someday," Gonzales joked. "I'd even challenge all of the colonels."



Photos by Staff Sgt. Erik Studenicka

Nevada Army Guard Col. Frank Gonzales set a single lift bench press record of 402 pounds in November while competing in the World Association of Benchers and Deadlifters (WABDL) world championships held in Reno, Nev.

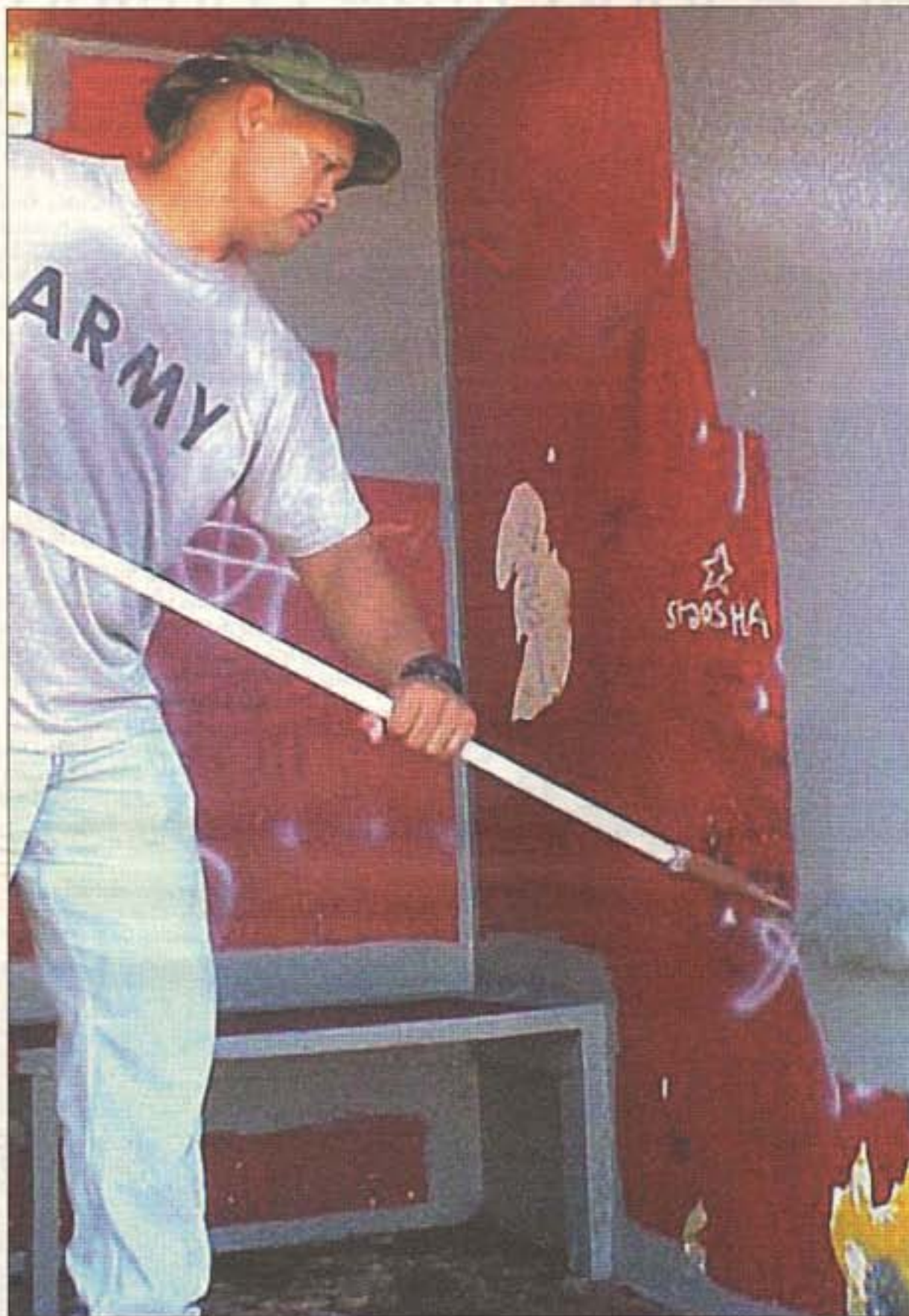


Photo by 2nd Lt. Ken Ola, Guam Public Affairs

Specialist Perry Guerrero cleans up during the Guam National Guard's island-wide Operation Graffiti Stamp-out by painting the inside of a bus stop with a new coat of gray paint.

Fast Facts

- Total land area is approximately 209 square miles.
- The island is about 30 miles long and 4 - 12 miles wide.
- It is mostly surrounded by a coral reef that stretches for about 80 miles.
- The average high temperature is 85 F, while the average low is around 70 F.
- It is an unincorporated U.S. Territory, similar to the Virgin Islands.
- The current population count is approximately 150,000.



Defending an economy

By 2nd Lt. Ken Ola

Guam Public Affairs Officer

FT. JUAN MUNA, GUAM — In this small American enclave in the western Pacific, where America's day begins, with its white sand beaches and warm tropical nights, tourism is a primary industry, critical to the economy. So it goes without saying that maintaining a clean and litter free environment is a must for Guam.

On the first Sunday of October, close to 1,000 soldiers, airmen, and family members descended on 16 villages before the sun was up to paint out graffiti and clean up the streets.

The island was divided into four sectors. The northern villages were assigned to the Guam Air National Guard units — 254th ABG, 254th CES and 254th SVF. A densely populated central village was given to units of the 1st Battalion, 294th Infantry (Light). Other central villages were assigned to Troop Command units, which included the 909th QM, 294th MI and the 1224th Engineering Detachment. The Guam Area Command took care of villages toward the south.

Graffiti, particularly on bus shelters and public park restrooms, has become a chronic problem for the village mayors and the local government's Public Works Department. With graffiti covered buildings dotting the main thoroughfares, the problem is one the island can ill-afford to ignore.

The island's visitor industry is focused on hundreds of tourists arriving daily from Japan, only a three-hour flight from the north. Korea is also fast becoming a tourism source for the island.

Operation Graffiti Stamp Out, the second in as many years, was part of the Guam Guard's organizational week, wherein it celebrated 21 years as the island's citizen force. Spearheading the graffiti eradication project was Brig. Gen. Jerry M. Rivera, the Guam National Guard Adjutant General.

Rivera said the graffiti stamp out was a way of expressing gratitude to the community for its continued support of the Guard. "We wanted to give something back to the community," he said.

Around 200 bus shelters were painted over; some of which had previously been completely covered in graffiti.

The project could be viewed as proof of the Guard's dual mission, according to Spc. Christopher Angoco.

"It shows now that we serve both the United States and the island of Guam," Angoco said. He hopes the facilities will remain graffiti free, although he doesn't think they will stay clear for long. "There's always that one kid..." he said.

Specialist Brian San Nicolas also encouraged kids to do the right thing.

"Hopefully, students who do use these bus stops have the courage to speak up in front of their peers and tell them its not right to write on these bus stops," he said.

Private 1st Class Silvano Teliu feels the Guard should make the graffiti stamp out an annual event.

"I think we should do it every year just to show that the Guard cares about these things," He said. If parents get more involved with their kids, Teliu thinks that would help stem this type of delinquent behavior. "It starts with the family," he added.

Following the completion of the project, reactions on talk shows and other media by the public were overwhelmingly positive. Some villagers expressed their thanks to the Guard by providing the soldiers buffet lunches in their villages.

Considering this response, Brig. Gen. Rivera indicated he would pursue conducting a monthly Graffiti Stamp-out using a purely volunteer force from the Army and Air Guard, family members and community members.

So far, a couple of days after the Stamp-out, cursory checks of the bus stops show they remain relatively clear of graffiti.

The importance of this industry to the island's fragile economy was strongly relayed to the U.S. Congress by Guam Congressman Robert Underwood last year, according to a report about the hearing on the state of U.S. tourism by the House Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection.

"Due to Guam's small size and geographical isolation, our private sector economy is minimally diversified and heavily dependent upon tourism, particularly from international travelers," Underwood told the subcommittee, adding that the travel and tourism industry accounts for nearly 40 percent of the island's workforce and 60 percent of the government's revenues.

Medal: A long time coming

Sgt. David E. Leiva
Detachment 1, 102nd PAD

CAMP BEAUREGARD, La. — Sergeant Leland Cobb was awarded numerous military honors, including two Purple Hearts, during his stint with the U.S. Marine Corps in Vietnam.

But he didn't find out about many of them — including the Bronze Star — until 25 years later, when he enlisted in the Louisiana Army National Guard.

In 1966, the Delhi, La. native was an 18-year-old Marine sent to perform counter-insurgency operations. A member of 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines, Charlie Co., Cobb served 18 months as a forward observer in several infantry companies and a 105mm artillery unit.

In July of that year, he was sent on a seek-and-destroy patrol when his squad ran into an enemy force. Outnumbered and outgunned, Cobb called in artillery fire and requested an immediate evacuation.

The helicopter sent to rescue the team suffered enemy hits. While the helicopter lay riddled with bullet holes and smoking, Cobb pinned the Viet Cong down with rapid fire, until he — the last one — climbed onboard. But his 200 pounds of gear and body weight made it too heavy for the damaged aircraft to take off.

So he hopped off with the radio so his squad could evacuate. "I was 18 years old. I was

gung ho," he said, "biting bullets and all that kinda stuff."

For the next 10 to 15 minutes, he called in one fire mission after another to fight off the advancing foe until a second helicopter came to retrieve him.

Was he afraid of death?

"Not really," he said. "You get scared when it's all over with."

Later, the commanding officer, Capt. Alex Lee, told Cobb he would be nominated for an award for his heroism in action. Lee, who retired as a lieutenant colonel, wrote a book, "Utter's BN: 2/7 Marines in Vietnam 1965-66," detailing the many combat missions the regiment took part in, including Operation Harvest Moon, in which 407 enemy soldiers were killed.

In a character reference letter in Cobb's personnel file, Lee described then-Cpl. Cobb's performance as "exemplary and professional to a degree seldom realized by experienced officers and staff NCOs."

Lee concluded that, "In short, Cpl. Cobb is far superior in every way to the norm expected for a Marine of his age and experience."

But Cobb's recognition for heroism got lost in the red tape of military bureaucracy. Several witnesses were supposed to sign affidavits to get the ball rolling. Then numerous people in his chain-of-command had to sign off on the nomination. The paperwork got lost while the war went on.

Cobb rotated back to the States and never heard about it again. He forgot about it — and the military forgot about him. He left the Marines in 1968 and returned home to Delhi. But Cobb's story doesn't end there.

In 1991, he enlisted in the Louisiana Army National Guard's 528th Engineers Battalion in Monroe as a truck driver. At the age of 42, the combat veteran, now with silver hair and a faded Marine bulldog tattoo on his right arm, wanted a chance to earn a military retirement.

The Guard was the only branch that would allow him to enlist, and only because he had prior service. "I came back in for the retirement benefits," he said. Cobb requested an official copy of his updated military personnel file.

And that's when he learned of his gallantry award for the first time.

"Look, I got the Bronze Star," he remembers laughing. It was one of several medals and ribbons he didn't know about. Had he not re-enlisted, it's conceivable Cobb may never have seen his recognition for heroism under fire acknowledged in writing.

Although there has been no official presentation of honors for his actions performed 36 years ago, Cobb isn't angry or disappointed.

"It's no big deal," he said. He purchased replicas through a mail order company.



In addition to bearing two Purple Hearts on his Class A uniform, Louisiana Guardsman, Sgt. Leland Cobb, now has a Bronze Star for his actions while under fire in Vietnam. He was awarded the medal more than 25 years ago without his knowledge.

FROM PAGE 1

Bill

"Senator Wellstone was very proud of the men and women, who served in the Minnesota National Guard. He was very impressed with their dedication and professionalism," said Mike Siebenaler, a spokesperson for Wellstone.

"Some people may not have taken the time to listen to the security personnel at building and airports, but he always did. When he discovered that many of them were sacrificing financially during their deployment, he wanted to take action to right this wrong," Siebenaler said.

Senator Mark Dayton, D-Minn., co-sponsor of the bill, agreed.

"Until now, the act's coverage has not included the National Guard as comprehensively as their active-duty and reserve counterparts. I believe this is wrong," Dayton said during a floor statement in November.

Corporal Sean Reagan, a member of the Minnesota National Guard's Company A, 2nd Battalion, 135th Infantry, was one of the soldiers activated for the airport security mission.

After reporting for duty, Reagan discovered his military pay would be about 60 percent less than his civilian pay as a network administrator.

"I just thought to myself, 'what am I going to do?'" Reagan said. "My wife worked part-time and stayed home with our two kids, but when this happened she started working as much as she could." Even so, Reagan said

they used up a significant amount of savings just to keep up with financial obligations.

"Instead of thinking about what I had to do for my country, I was worrying about how I was going to make my house and car payments. It was tough. It's a distraction to worry about that kind of stuff," he said. "In one sense, this is what I signed up to do. But I also had to ask myself if I was ready to lose everything I had worked for during the last nine years."

Some soldiers were rotated through the deployment in shorter increments due to financial hardships.

"It would have been a lot easier to stay on the deployment longer if we'd had those benefits," Reagan said. "For all practical purposes we were on active duty, but we weren't receiving the same treatment as active-duty soldiers."

Captain Charles Kemper, officer-in-charge at the Minneapolis/St. Paul airport, watched many of his soldiers struggle financially.

Kemper said a lot of his soldiers were cut off from their civilian pay immediately. "If this had already passed they could have requested the interest rates on their debt be lowered to six percent right away. For the soldiers who took a significant pay cut, this would have given them some time to figure out how to meet their financial obligations," he added.

Kemper was fortunate to work for a company that continued his medical benefits and



Photo by 2nd Lt. Anna Lewicki

Minnesota National Guard soldiers supervise check-point activity during Operation Noble Eagle. National Guard members called to federal duty under state control are now eligible to receive protections under the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act of 1940.

made up the difference between his military and civilian salary.

But Kemper and his soldiers said the significance goes beyond just the benefits.

"This gives a protection for Title 32 soldiers that we didn't have before. It shows that the government is responsive to the needs of the

soldier," Kemper said.

Last year, Wellstone sponsored a similar bill that passed in the Senate but was later dropped during Senate-House negotiations.

The Minnesota State Legislature passed its own version of the bill as a result.

Theodore Marrs: Architect of the total force

By Charles J. Gross, Ph.D.

Chief, Air National Guard History

America's military responses to the terrorist attacks on the continental United States on Sept. 11, 2001 highlighted the critical roles which Guardsmen and Reservists play in defending the nation. In the 14 months following those assaults, approximately 130,000 Guardsmen and Reservists were recalled to active duty to fight the war against terrorism. The numerical high point of their involvement came in June 2002 when more than 85,000 Guardsmen and Reservists were on active duty.

Under the auspices of the total force policy, Guardsmen and Reservists performed virtually every mission assigned to their active duty counterparts. Largely because of force structure and budgetary reductions following the Cold War's end, some missions were performed primarily or entirely by the reserve components of the armed forces. For example, over 56 percent of the Air Force's air refueling capability resided in the Air National Guard (ANG) and the Air Force Reserve (AFRES). Prior to the attacks on Sept. 11, the Air Force had assigned the responsibility for manning the continental air defenses of the United States and maintaining the nation's air sovereignty to the ANG.

The total force policy was largely the brainchild of Dr. Theodore C. Marrs, an avid former Air Guardsman and Air Force Reservist from Alabama, who served as a high ranking civilian official in the Air Force and the Defense Department in the early 1970s.

Marrs based his ideas largely on the Air Force's management of the ANG and the AFRES after the Korean War. Those management principles included: close integration of reserve component planning, budgeting and training with those activities in the Air Force; training the reserve components according to the same high standards as the active force; using the ANG and the AFRES to augment ongoing peacetime missions such as airlift and air defense through volunteerism wherever possible; ensuring that the major air commands such as TAC and MAC that gained Reservists and Guardsmen in wartime trained them in peacetime; ensuring that, for the most part, the ANG and the AFRES shared missions with the active force; and providing the Guard and Reserve with the most modern weapons systems available. Those practices were designed to posture the air reserve components for immediate global deployment into combat upon mobilization.

As American military involvement in the

Vietnam War drew to a close, Dr. Marrs had the opportunity to develop his ideas about the reserve components and sell them to top Pentagon officials. He served as deputy assistant secretary of the Air Force during the 1960s. In 1970, President Nixon appointed him as assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs. As the United States withdrew its armed forces from Southeast Asia, defense spending and the active duty military force structure were reduced significantly. To help compensate for those cuts, the Nixon administration turned to an historic precedent - greater reliance on the Guard and Reserve. To strengthen those components of

the armed forces, all reserve forces planning and policy making within the Department of Defense (DOD) was to be governed by the total force concept. Based largely on Marrs' ideas about the Air Force's experience with the ANG and the AFRES, it was formally adopted by Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird on 21 August 1970.

The total force concept sought to strengthen and rebuild public confidence in the Guard and Reserve while saving money by reducing the size of the active duty force. Those objectives emerged from America's disenchantment with the conflict in Southeast Asia. In practical terms, the total force sought to insure that all policy making, planning, programming, and budgeting activities within the DOD considered active and reserve component forces concurrently. Its ambitious objective was to determine the most efficient mix of those forces in terms of costs versus their contributions to national security. In reaction to the Vietnam War, it also committed the nation to use Guardsmen and Reservists instead of draftees as the first and primary source of manpower to augment the active duty forces in any future armed conflicts.

Dr. Marrs faced a difficult struggle in gaining formal approval of the total force idea within the Pentagon. He recalled that:

"Despite protestations that the Guard could not fly jets, maintain them, or fight them . . . the Air Force had gradually accepted the idea that the Guard could fly and fight and was a real resource. . . . The Air Force Secretaries and Generals were interested in R & D—not the Guard. They let me present the Guard

budget—always getting more than I asked for from Guard-oriented [congressional] committees. . . . I planned to convert the Air Force's total force concept to Defense policy. A draft letter for the Secretary of Defense to sign was leaked to the Services. The Air Force was silent. The Navy Secretary said this looked good, but the Admirals circled the ships. There were two reactions in the Army. First, there was the idea that Total Force was innocuous and could be ignored. . . . Second, there was a strong feeling that Total Force was some sort of camouflaged assault against the Citadel on the Hudson. . .



Marrs

they did not see the Total Force as a chance to show the flag in every state and county and thereby, gain political, social, and emotional support needed for development in peacetime, as well as ready units in wartime."

The Army and the Navy failed to block the total force in the Pentagon. Secretary Laird approved it. Dr. Marrs was convinced that the Secretary of Defense had signed on because the total force approach had worked in the Air Force. He stressed that "The clinching point was that if fly-boy generals could make it work that certainly the brilliant Admirals, the mature Army Generals, and the 'nothing's-impossible-for-us' Marine Generals could do the same job."

The underlying political motivation for the total force concept was the determination of key military and congressional leaders to prevent a repeat of a serious policy error during the Vietnam War. Along with lengthening casualty lists and the prospect of an endless conflict in Southeast Asia, the failure of the Johnson administration to initiate a major mobilization of the National Guard and Reserves had helped to undermine public support for the war. A former commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam, Gen. Creighton Abrams, recognized that connection when he instituted the "Total Army" concept in 1972. Reversing the Army's stance when he became Chief of Staff, Abrams " . . . sought to eliminate the disastrous Vietnam War fallacy that wars could be fought 'in cold blood' without paying the price of national mobilization."

General Abrams tried to fuse the active Army and its reserve components into a single coherent force. In effect, that policy made it impossible for the Army to go to war against a major opponent without mobilizing the Army National Guard (ARNG) and the U.S. Army Reserve (USAR). Abrams recognized that, what some saw as the greatest weakness of the National Guard and Reserves -- their political sensitivity -- was their strongest point. The Army Chief of Staff understood that the Guard and Reserves, not draftees, were the strongest political links between the American people and the active duty military establishment. The former were part of organized groups with established links to Capitol Hill as well as courthouses and statehouses across America. The latter were composed of individuals, many of them from the more vulnerable and powerless groups in American society, who lacked effective representation in the political system.

The Nixon administration also found the "total force concept" useful on Capitol Hill. Sensitive to the intensity of anti-military congressional feeling in the early 1970s, the administration stressed that a much larger share of the nation's scaled-back defense budgets was going to the reserve components. Although military spending dropped dramatically from 42.1 percent of the federal budget when Richard Nixon was inaugurated in 1969 to 23.7 percent in 1977 when Gerald Ford left the White House, the dollars devoted to the reserve components rose significantly. The budgets of the National Guard and Reserves nearly doubled between FY 1968 and FY 1974. Acknowledging that substantial progress had been made in implementing the total force concept, Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger upgraded its official status on 23 August 1973. He wrote that the "Total Force is no longer a concept. It is now a Total Force Policy which integrates the active, Guard, and reserve forces into a homogenous whole."

President Nixon brought Dr. Marrs into his White House staff in 1974. He worked on a variety of programs for President Ford including veterans affairs and the Bicentennial celebration. He worked for the Indian Health Service in Albuquerque, New Mexico from 1976 until his retirement in 1978. He died of a heart attack on 17 December 1990 at the University of New Mexico hospital in Albuquerque. Although his role in developing the total force policy is not widely known, he deserves to be credited as its principal architect.

The spirit of persistence

By Specialist Robert L. Jones

Detachment 1, 444th MPAD

WILMINGTON, Del. — On a sweltering August afternoon in 1969 in Vietnam, two platoons of Company A, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry, were pinned down by North Vietnamese Army (NVA) machine gun fire in the rice paddies near An Lam, about 30 kilometers west of Da Nang.

Just two nights before, machine gunner, Spc. Barry Parsons had just lived through one of "the scariest nights of my life" as his platoon, on night patrol, pulled through a fierce fire-



Parsons

fight with NVA soldiers.

Now a Lt. Col. serving in the Army Corps of Engineers with the Delaware National Guard, Parsons remembers the day vividly.

"A platoon sergeant

came up to me, and he started stuttering, 'we've got 54 NVA, in front of us,' and I looked out in front of my bunker and sure enough you'd see them carrying bangalore torpedoes, squatting down, moving into position," Parsons recalled. "I never thought I was going to live because, I was the point bunker with the machine gun, and that's what they want to knock out."

He recounts the deadly scenario of his unit's walking into what could have been an ambush.

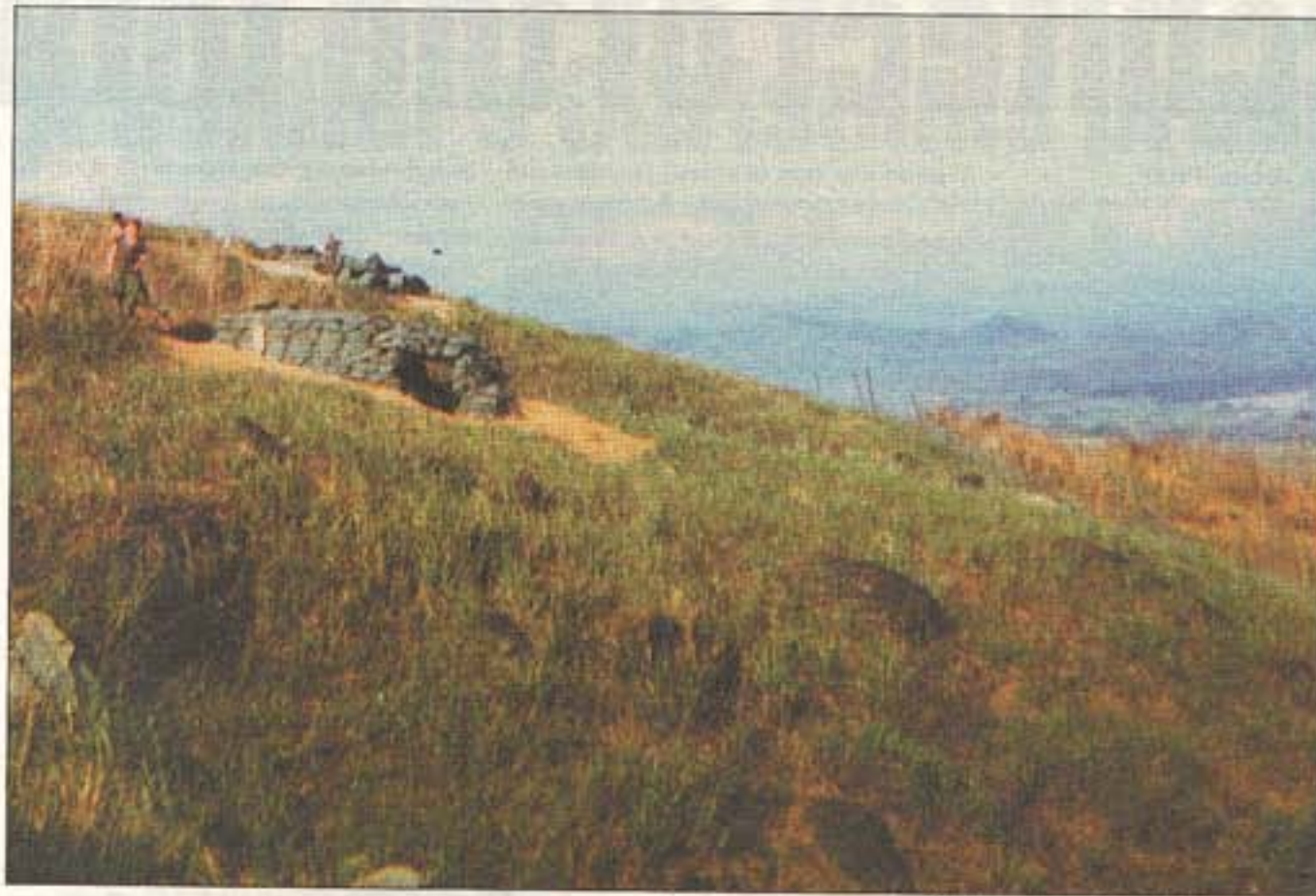
"Luckily for us, we picked them up," he said. "I fired my M60 till about four o'clock in the morning, and by the time I was done, it was red, glowing, and it started (barrel) sagging, so we had to cease fire."

With his machine gun temporarily out-of-service, Parsons' sense of improvisation took over.

"I was picking up LAWs (the M72 Light Antitank Weapon), and firing at them just to get them away. And there was a heavy body count. The only fire we had coming in was mortar rounds. Nobody else fired a round, and to our amazement, we were told later they captured some of the wounded that they were not to fire until they gave the signal."

Three or four days later, the point element of his company became pinned down in the rice paddy. His company began drawing small arms and automatic fire from an elaborate underground bunker complex manned by NVA soldiers.

"There were 20 improved machine gun firing positions dug down in this hillside," he explained. "They had very ingeniously dug them underneath the root system of the bamboo that grew wild over there. If you've ever



(Left) Parsons' view of LZ West, circa 1968-69. (Below) Soldiers from his patrol rest after calling in B-52 air strikes, near An Lam, Vietnam.

seen bamboo grow, the roots intertwine with each other horizontally and reinforces soil conservation, but also strengthens reinforcement against weapons."

Soldiers from the First and Second platoons were threatened with imminent peril, as a number were already wounded, and one soldier dead. Assessing the near-impossible situation, his platoon leader, Master Sgt. James Price, of the Kansas National Guard, asked for volunteers to try to break through the NVA defenses using the LAW.

"He asked 'anybody ever fire one of these things?'" Parsons said. "Right away, boom, my hand goes up. The next thing I know, I have two LAWs from our platoon, two LAWs from the third, and one from headquarters. Then, there's a crate coming in, being dropped off by a helicopter, and I'm standing up there and I'm firing LAWs and this soldier's directing me to bunker positions."

He took out bunker after bunker, but doesn't remember being in the middle of hostile fire.

"Everybody says the bullets were going around me, but I don't remember anything. All I was thinking about was those guys out in the rice paddy and getting them out," he said. "Without the LAWs, we probably would not have gotten anywhere," he said. "I don't know how many LAWs I fired, but I know there was a lot of them."

By the end of the day, Parsons' impromptu efforts would make it possible for his unit to extract themselves and lead returning soldiers to seek out Parsons for saving their lives, while risking his own.

Perhaps just as fascinating is the story of Parsons' struggle in gaining recognition for

his heroic actions in Vietnam.

When Parsons transferred to the Delaware National Guard in 1980 as a first Lieutenant, his new battalion commander read through his personnel file and asked about his Bronze Star.

"I asked 'What Bronze Star?' Parsons said, "and he showed me the letter of recommendation that Master Sgt. Price had sent to my old battalion commander that I had never seen."

During the next 21 years, Parsons ran into "a lot of walls" after he was told that the recommendation had been lost.

He pursued official recognition for his actions through the Department of the Army, often getting vague and contradictory responses.

"When you run into so many stone walls, and nobody wants to do anything, you kind of give up. You say 'well, I'm not going to fight the system,'" he said.

Finally, in January 2001 - almost 32 years after his heroic deeds - Parsons was officially awarded the Bronze Star, with the "V" device (valor), for "personal heroism, professional competence, and devotion to duty."

"Specialist Parsons continually exposed himself by standing in full view of the enemy bunkers while firing, ignoring small arms fire directed at him," according to the award.

Presenting the award, Delaware Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Frank Vavala lauded Parsons, saying "it's not very often I present such a prestigious award. We are privileged to have this hero, this combat veteran in our midst."

Today, Parsons shows the same sense of tireless determination he exhibited as a 23-year-old infantryman in Vietnam: Never tak-



ing no for an answer, and drawing just as much pride from his National Guard service as from his active duty time.

"It didn't become a point of the award to me, it became a principle as a civilian and a part-time soldier," he said. "You know, this country's founded on the Minutemen, the citizen soldier, coming to the defense of their country."

Parsons is currently the deputy director of personnel at the Delaware Army National Guard headquarters. In civilian life, he works as Project Safety Director for the Turner Construction Company in Philadelphia. Their current project, the National Constitution Center, in Philadelphia, near Independence Hall, is one that is close to his heart, that he feels a connection with. "That's what we do as National Guardsmen, as citizen soldiers. We defend the Constitution and the Bill of Rights," he said.

Photos courtesy of Lt. Col. Barry Parsons