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THE ON GUARD

Volume XXVV, No. 7

NEWSPAPER of the ARMY and AIR NATIONAL GUARD

March-April 2001

Crash claims 21

Guard rallies to support families of Virginia 203rd Red Horse engineers, Florida 171st Aviation crew

By MSgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

The National Guard rallied its resources to support the grief-stricken families and friends of 21 citizen-airmen and soldiers killed late Saturday morning, March 3, when their twin-engine transport flying through heavy weather crashed and burned in rural central Georgia.

A crisis center was set up in Virginia Beach, Va., to help survivors cope with their loss of 18 Air National Guard civil engineers, officials reported. Chaplains and family support representatives fanned out across Florida to comfort the families of the three-member Army National Guard flight crew, said a Florida Guard spokesman.

The 18 Virginia Air Guard members belonged to the 203rd Red Horse Flight and were returning to Virginia from Florida after spending two weeks of annual training at Hurlburt Field near Fort Walton Beach.

The three members of the C-23 Sherpa's Florida Army Guard flight crew belonged to Detachment 1, 1st Battalion, 171st Aviation in Lakeland.

No one survived the crash that, according to National Guard historians, is believed to be among the worst peacetime

tragedies in the National Guard's 364-year history. The cause of the crash remains under investigation.

The Virginia and Florida governors authorized state flags to be flown at half-staff.

Lt. Gen. Russell Davis, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, pledged "our immediate support in responding to the needs" of the families and members of the two stricken units "as they cope with the aftermath of this devastating loss."

President George Bush, a former Air National Guard fighter pilot, said he was deeply saddened at the news of the crash.

"The tragic loss reminds us of the sacrifices made each and every day by all of our men and women in uniform," Bush

"The tragic loss reminds us of the sacrifices made each and every day by all of our men and women in uniform"

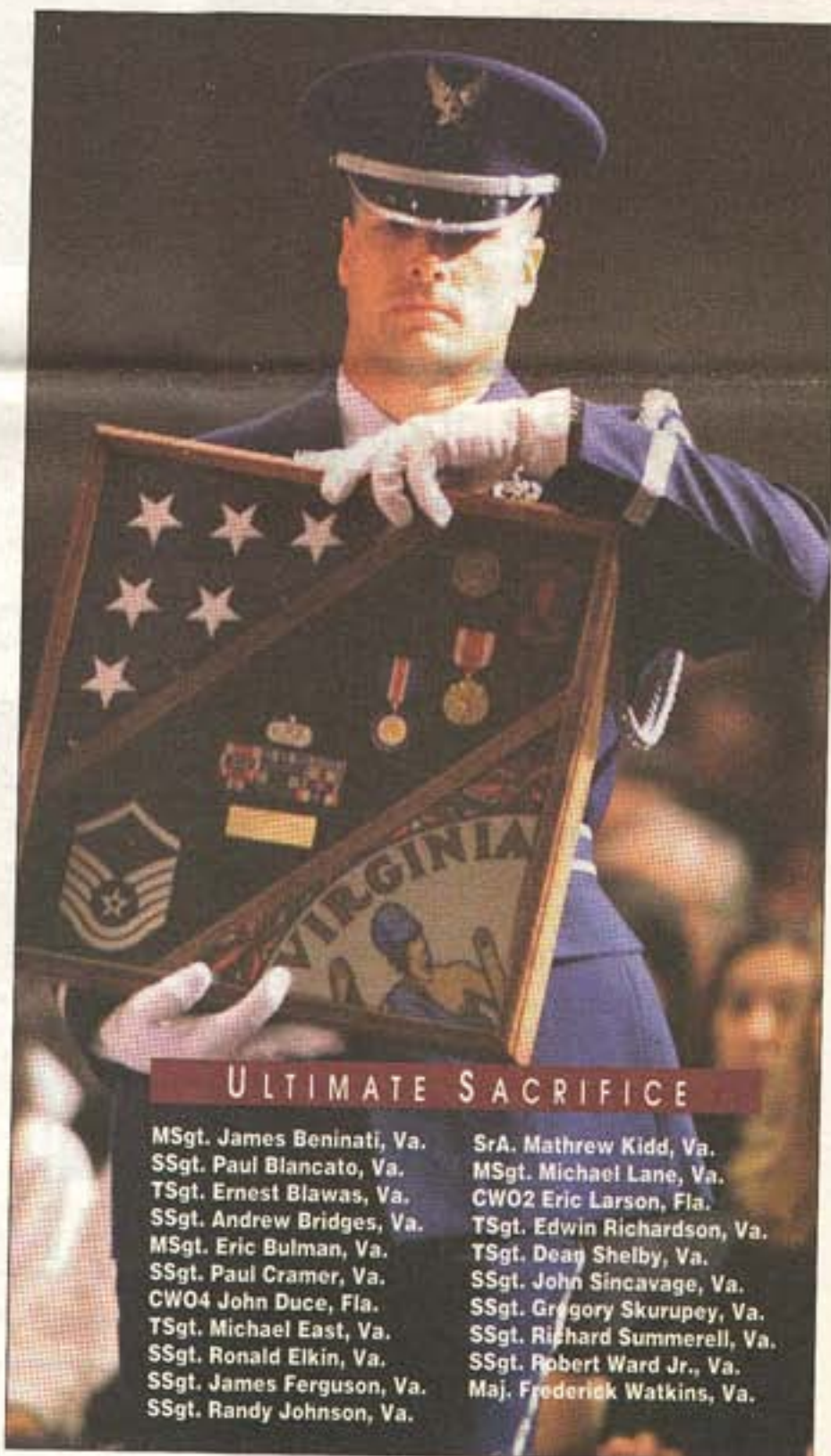
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said in a statement. "The price of freedom is never free. Today's events remind us that it is sometimes unspeakably high."

The transport plane crashed at 11 a.m. on Saturday into a field at Unadilla, Ga., while flying through heavy rain.

"We have received help and support from the entire community in the Virginia Beach area to include civilian agencies and all the services," reported Vir-

See CRASH, page 4



ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

MSgt. James Beninati, Va.
SSgt. Paul Blancato, Va.
TSgt. Ernest Blawas, Va.
SSgt. Andrew Bridges, Va.
MSgt. Eric Bulman, Va.
SSgt. Paul Cramer, Va.
CWO4 John Duce, Fla.
TSgt. Michael East, Va.
SSgt. Ronald Elkin, Va.
SSgt. James Ferguson, Va.
SSgt. Randy Johnson, Va.

SrA. Mathew Kidd, Va.
MSgt. Michael Lane, Va.
CWO2 Eric Larson, Fla.
TSgt. Edwin Richardson, Va.
TSgt. Dean Shelby, Va.
SSgt. John Sincavage, Va.
SSgt. Gregory Skurupey, Va.
SSgt. Richard Summerell, Va.
SSgt. Robert Ward Jr., Va.
Maj. Frederick Watkins, Va.



COMMENTARY

Reporter-at-Large: Bob Haskell

ABOUT the PAPER

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.

Submission Requirements:

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Three decades of mental snapshots

By MSgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

A trim, 30-something wife wearing a yellow summer dress and carrying red roses for her Army Guard soldier is an image that never quite goes away. The soldier, in his worn desert uniform, returned to the armory in Gardiner, Maine, on that late summer afternoon in 1991 after months of gritty duty in the Persian Gulf.

Her husband had just gone through hell during Operation Desert Storm, the woman insisted, and he would, by God, get a proper homecoming.

That is one of many mental snapshots that have flooded my memory since crossing the threshold that more or less makes me one of the National Guard's senior citizens.

March 11 was the 30th anniversary of that day in 1971 when I first swore to spend the next six years doing my duty for Maine and, if necessary, the nation as a part-time member of this thing called "The Guard."

Six years led to 12 and then to 20. Suddenly, 30 years have flown by. Overall, it has been a remarkable adventure thanks to my background as a newspaperman.

It has been my privilege to interview and photograph and serve with Americans whose commitment to their states and this nation are also measured by the countless Sundays they have spent away from their homes.

None of that, however, occurred to me on March 11. That Sunday was consumed with compiling the stories of that weekend's memorial services in Virginia and Florida for 21 Air and Army Guardsmen who had made the ultimate sacrifice eight days earlier when their plane crashed in Georgia.

My personal milestone registered the following Wednesday or Thursday. Then I remembered the wife in the yellow dress anxiously waiting to hold her husband and many other images that have defined the National Guard that I have known for three decades.

The Fulda Gap, where a high fence and guard towers once separated East and West Germany, is the ugliest place I have ever seen. It was in the fall of 1984, during an annual REFORGER exercise in which Guard troops were part of a military pilgrimage to Europe. We were there to show the Warsaw Pact that we could get there in a hurry if we had to. Thankfully, the fence and the towers are gone.

The howling, winter night beside a remote pond in Downeast Maine when I stepped out of my squad's shelter of boughs and canvas to seek relief during a week of survival training with other Army Guard soldiers. The wind chill factor was 41-below.

The ecstasy and the agony of a two-hour flight in the back seat of a Vermont Air Guard F-16B jet fighter that was based in Bangor, Maine, to keep Russian bombers from flying too

close to our homeland, Cape Cod was breathtaking from 20,000 feet -- even if we were upside down.

The black flood waters that washed over the headlights and the hood of a five-ton truck as Guard soldiers searched for stranded civilians along the streets of Grand Forks during a wet, miserable night in North Dakota.

The two infantrymen from Virginia who stood side-by-side, their rifles loaded and leveled, on a chilled Veterans Day afternoon in Croatia, as a white car drove toward the bridge to Bosnia they were guarding on the Sava River. The car's driver, who was in the wrong place at the wrong time, stopped and backed away before those Army Guard peacekeepers had to open fire.

The top-level diplomats from Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic who asked many of our Guard generals during a March morning near Brussels, Belgium, to help their countries get into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Those former communist countries became NATO allies three years later.

The disbelief that 21 good men had died on a rainy March day in Georgia during a routine flight from Florida to Virginia; and the realization that much of what the Guard does frequently defies the definition of routine.

LETTERS POLICY:

'Letters to the Editor' are subject to editing for space and style considerations.

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GUARD TOONS

By Lyle Farquhar

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"... So when they started to remodel our training facility, we had to find an alternate location."



IN THE NEWS

■ VIP Visit ■ For the Family ■ Emergency e-mail

Bush visits W. Virginia base

■ 'While you may not be full-time soldiers, you are full-time patriots'

By SFC Eric Wedeking
National Guard Bureau

Marking the finale of a three-day tour at three military facilities along the United States' eastern seaboard, President George W. Bush met with West Virginia National Guard troops and reservists while praising their ongoing efforts and promising the administration's future help.

"The National Guard and Reserves are a vital part of America's national defense," Bush said to a gathering of about 2,000 troops and their families in a West Virginia Air Guard aircraft hangar at Yeager Field in Charleston, W. Va. "I want you to know that you not only



Photo by Maj. Randy Noller

have a former Guardsman in the White House, you have a friend."

Since Bush served as a fighter pilot with the Texas Air National Guard during the Vietnam War, that remark drew the most-noisy round of applause and cheers from the audience.

Besides praising their ongoing

efforts throughout the nation and world, Bush also reminded the troops, their families and employers that his administration is sensitive to the recent high operational tempo they have been experiencing.

The president pointed toward

VIP VISIT -- President Bush greets a West Virginia Army Guard Huey helicopter pilot.

family support from the Guard and other reserve components after the active duty forces have been reduced in size while U.S. defense missions have increased at home and abroad.

"I also want to recognize the employers of the National Guardsmen and Reservists, especially those here today," he said. "Citizen-soldiers have always depended on selfless employers. The generosity of the employers in West Virginia wasn't learned in MBA textbooks or in business schools. It was learned because these folks are patriotic."

"They care about their state and they care about their country above love of profit," the president added. "And you have the gratitude of our nation."

Bush's military tour -- which included proposals for \$5.7 bil-

■ See BUSH, page 5

Emergency radio network to install e-mail

By MSgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

Fears of Y2K computer meltdowns have long since subsided, but have hardly been forgotten.

The National Guard Bureau is still improving its high-frequency emergency radio network designed to link the 54 states and territories should normal telephone and computer systems crash for other reasons, such as the Feb. 28 earthquake that rocked the Pacific Northwest.

The new twist is electronic mail, explained CWO2 Richard Montgomery, the high frequency system's manager in the branch for Military Support to Civilian Authorities.

Once the system is installed, essential users at the Army Guard's Readiness Center in Arlington, Va., and at emergency operations centers in the states and territories will be able to send and receive e-mail over the National Guard High Frequency Radio Operating Network. The new system will work



Photo by MSgt. Bob Haskell

LINKED -- CWO2 Richard Montgomery sends an e-mail message to New York over a high frequency link as Suzanne Simon Kwak watches.

like their personal computers.

Montgomery anticipates that the new e-mail software will be fielded at Guard installations from Puerto Rico to Guam beginning in early April. He hopes all systems are installed and working by September.

"If they know Outlook, they will be good-

to-go," said Montgomery.

"They won't even know they're connected to a high frequency radio," promised William Beamish, a senior manager for the Rochester-based Harris Corporation that has designed the software. "We are making this system robust enough so it will be able to get information through poor connections."

Operators will be able to transmit e-mail, including compressed digital photographs and other images, over the same radios on which they talk, it was explained.

"People will be able to establish or check the message link by using e-mail rather than calling in," said Maj. Don Hathorne, the military support branch's new chief. "That will require less time on the radio, and it will require fewer high frequency operators."

Guard officials plan to improve the network by making it possible to patch radio transmissions directly into telephones.

It will cost the Guard an estimated \$2.7 million a year to upgrade and sustain the high frequency system, said Montgomery.

NATIONAL BRIEFS

Life insurance benefit proposed

The Bush administration endorsed legislation to increase by \$50,000, to \$250,000, death benefits for families of military personnel.

The legislation would make the survivor benefit increase -- which had been scheduled to take effect April 1 -- retroactive to Oct. 1.

That would allow the families of the victims of the March 3 crash of a Florida Army Guard C-23 in Georgia, in which 21 National Guardsmen were killed, to receive an additional \$50,000.

Alaska, Kansas units earn family readiness award

An Alaska Air Guard and Kansas Army Guard unit were the recent recipients of the Department of Defense's first Reserve Forces Family Readiness Award.

Kansas's Battery E (Target Acquisition), 161st Field Artillery in Great Bend and Larned, and the Frontier State's 168th Air Refueling Wing based in Fairbanks were recognized for favorably affecting family support and readiness.

"More than any time in the past, the increasingly high operations tempo of our Reserve servicemembers requires a bond between family readiness and the member's ability to pay full attention to the military mission," said Charles Cragin, deputy assistant secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs.

CRASH

FROM PAGE 1

ginia National Guard officials. "The tragedy has shown the commitment from our communities, which has always been the foundation of the Virginia National Guard."

As many as a dozen chaplains and three members of a Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors team offered psychological and moral support to an estimated two dozen family members and to other Air Guard members of the 203rd Red Horse Flight at Camp Pendleton in Virginia Beach.

"The mood here is very somber. This is a tremendous loss for the families and for the other people in this unit to have to come to grips with," said Maj. Debbie Magaldi, a unit spokesperson.

Maj. Frederick Watkins was identified as the ranking member of the crew that had spent the previous two weeks doing electrical work and other types of construction at the base in Florida. The 17 others were enlisted men.

Red Horse squadrons are civil engineer units that can be deployed rapidly to erect tent cities and other facilities for troops in the field. The twin-engine, C-23 Sherpas can carry as many as 30 passengers and can also be used for transporting equipment, airdrops and medical evacuation, it was explained.

One of the pilots, CWO4 John Duce, 49, was identified as a Vietnam veteran and full-time Florida Army Guard technician.

Maj. Gen. Ronald Harrison, Florida's adjutant general, visited with the families of Duce and CWO2 Eric Larson, the other pilot.

"They were killed in the execution of their duties, and their sacrifice was in the service to their country," reflected the National Guard Bureau's chief about all 21 who died.

"Both organizations have taken a very hard blow that will impact the members, their families, and their communities," said Davis.

"Our hearts are heavy with the magnitude of this sudden catastrophe," he added.

Endangered species find havens

■ *Army Guard's 1.3 million acres is home to 47 federally-listed species*

By Rena Clark
National Guard Bureau

As Army Guard units train to protect the nation from dangerous foes, its soldiers share their training areas with creatures needing immediate protection.

Endangered species, from the American burying beetle to the gray wolf, have found a haven on approximately 1.3 million acres of Army Guard training land.

To successfully manage both, the Guard is implementing Integrated Natural Resources Management Plans, or INRMPs, for the 91 Army Guard training sites serving as home to 47 federal-listed threatened and endangered species and hundreds of state-listed species.

The INRMPs are detailed management plans designed to address everything from battle training to bluebirds.

"The plans help us decide how to create better military training opportunities, while conserving the resources that the public has entrusted to us," said Derek Halberg, the Army Guard's natural resource program manager.

Although federal law now requires DOD installations to have INRMPs in place by Nov. 16, the Guard began implementing them years ago. By the time the law was passed in 1997, about 20 states were developing the plans and six states had already implemented them.

The Idaho Army Guard was one state to jump at the opportunity to develop a

plan for its 138,000-acre Orchard Training Area, which is situated entirely within the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area.

"As the only heavy armor training area that is also part of a conservation area, we saw the need for an INRMP," said Marjorie McHenry, the Idaho Army Guard's natural resource manager. "Because of our location, our actions require coordination with other agencies. The INRMP pulls everything together."

Incorporated into the documents are ways to keep the lands prairie-like, which benefits training and some species. In some instances, Halberg noted, training activities that result in frequent, low intensity fires mimic the natural distur-

bed burns -- fires set by professionals to clear brush from range areas.

Similar to the moths and Michaux's sumac, the American burying beetle at Fort Chaffee, Ark., relies on the open space created from fires. Scott Simon, from the state's Nature Conservancy's field office, applauds the Guard's efforts.

"We appreciate the Guard's commitment to maintaining open areas for training and for maintaining a well-managed ecosystem," he said.

Although the plans focus on the preservation of land and species, sometimes the plan is to battle nature. Alien species that invade sensitive habitats are a "huge problem," said Melissa Dumanan, the Hawaii Army Guard's natural resources conservation manager.

Its 11 Army Guard training sites host 33 federal or state threatened or endangered species, including the *Schiedea adamantis* -- an endangered shrub found at Fort Ruger's Diamond Head Crater, the only place in the world where it occurs naturally.

"Hawaii has the smallest land mass with the highest number of endangered species," she explained. "A huge problem is that habitats become contaminated by weedy species that get to new locations by travelling on training gear."

"The INRMP describes how we can educate soldiers so they will clean their gear," Dumanan added. "By doing that, soldiers will play a key role in curtailing the spread of invasive species that threaten rare species."

Halberg said there are many ways to balance training and conservation needs, but it will require a lot of feedback from those who design soldier training.

"The lands are there to support the mission," he said. "We must train to be prepared, while managing, conserving and enhancing our natural resources."

"The good news," Halberg added, "is we can do both."



Photo by Cadet Wendy Cook

TAKING ROOT-- Hawaii Army Guard environmental assistant Molly Foley (left) and Melissa Ito plant seedlings of the endangered *Schiedea Adamantis*.

bance of fires that have occurred over time. As a result, training areas are the last, best habitat for moths at Camp Edwards in Massachusetts, and a plant, Michaux's sumac, at Fort Pickett, Va.

Michaux's sumac, a federal-listed endangered plant, is doing so well at Pickett that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is transplanting it to other locations.

To ensure the land will remain open enough for training needs and species survival, several INRMPs call for pre-



Photo by Sgt. Clinton Wood

KNEE-DEEP

Through a haze of smoke, Minnesota Army Guard soldiers trudge through knee-deep snow during a firepower demonstration Feb. 26 at Camp Ripley, Minn. The training was part of the 28th annual U.S./Norwegian troop reciprocal exchange program.

BUSH VISIT

FROM PAGE 1

lion in pay raises, improved housing and medical benefits, and beefed up homeland defense efforts — sent a strong signal to one citizen-airman and his family that Bush was intent on bolstering the entire U.S. military, but particularly the National Guard.

"The president seems to be proud to be a Guardsman and he liked being around other Guardsmen. He seems sincere to me and likes people," said West Virginia Air Guard SSgt. Peter Hinton, an electrician with the 130th Air Wing in Charlotte, who watched with his daughter Rachel perched atop his soldiers as the presidential airplane departed the Yeager Field runway.

"We voted for him," said Hinton, who previously had been

rope while flying missions between the Balkans and Germany where National Guard and Reserve forces make up between 15 and 20 percent of the total U.S. military deployed there. The president also pointed to the West Virginia National Guard's 15 disaster relief activations in the last six years.

"I'm worried that we are trying to be all things to all people around the world, and therefore, creating tension," he said. "It's not only tension for employer to employee. It's tensions between husband and wife over deployments. Constant deployments really create a severe issue for morale throughout the military."

The president plans to address that issue ensuring the U.S. military is trained and prepared to fight and win war.

"Therefore," Bush observed, "We prevent war from happening in the first place."

On the home front, Bush promised that the National Guard will become involved in expanded domestic security issues having successfully "stepped up to the challenge" of augmenting active-duty forces overseas.

"As threats to America change, your role will change," he predicted. "The National Guard and Reserve will be more involved in homeland security, confronting acts of terror and the disorder our enemies may try to create. I welcome the important part you will play in protecting our nation and its people."

Surrounded by a military color guard, the presidential aircraft, several C-130 "Hercules" aircraft, a UH-1 "Huey" helicopter and a howitzer, West Virginia Air Guard MSgt. Mike Eshbaugh — a member of the

167th Airlift Wing in Martinsburg — said this wasn't the first time he had met the president.

Thirty-three years earlier, both Eshbaugh and his Commander-in-Chief had both served as airman recruits in the same U.S. Air Force basic training class in July 1968 at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

Eshbaugh presented the President with a photo to sign of their basic training graduation. He said seeing Bush again after more than three decades brought back fond memories.

"At one point when I was in basic training, I was about ready to give up, so the drill instructor

INSIDE THE PRESIDENTIAL VISIT

McGhee Tyson security forces chief experiences 'thrill of a lifetime' when President Bush presides over his promotion

Pinned by the 'Prez'

By Capt. Teresa Ward
Tennessee National Guard

Getting a promotion is a big deal to anyone in the military. However, being pinned by the commander-in-chief with 300 co-workers watching is special.

Tennessee Air Guard's Terry L. Hickie experienced that feeling Feb. 21, when President George W. Bush pinned the security forces chief to the rank of Chief Master Sergeant (E-9) at McGhee Tyson Air National Guard Base in Knoxville.

"It's an honor to make Chief Master Sergeant, but it's the thrill of a lifetime to be promoted by the commander-in-chief," said Hickie. "I will remember this day for the rest of my life."

Hickie had met a promotion board the day before the president's visit. Under normal circumstances, he would have been promoted the first day of the month. However, the opportunity to be pinned by Bush prompted personnel from the base, Air Force One and the White House to work to make the event possible.

Hickie's promotion marked the first time a president has promoted an individual

other than the Air Force One crew, reported an Air Force One staff member.

The President's visit had McGhee Tyson citizen-airmen in high spirits.

"Chief Hickie is the epitome of a non-commissioned officer," said Lt. Col. Richard Julian, 134th Support Group commander. "We are proud of his accomplishments and proud to have him represent the Tennessee Air National Guard."

Hickie has been a member of the 134th Security Forces Squadron for 27 years. He started as a security specialist and has worked his way up to supervisor, superintendent, and now chief. He has 18 federal and state awards for acts from neutralizing a hostage situation to serving during Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

The chief holds a bachelor of science degree in education, two associate degrees in criminal justice, and numerous certificates from security courses he has completed. If that's not enough, he graduated from the University of Tennessee *summa cum laude*, was the honor graduate from Security Police Technical School, and the distinguished graduate from the Noncommissioned Officer Academy.

Hickie said he strides to be an example for all Guardsmen and women. He said he expects professionalism, but realizes no one is perfect. He added that humor and understanding are important traits.

"Making Chief Master Sergeant and being pinned by President Bush is the pinnacle of my career," said Hickie. "I think my wife, Lois, enjoyed the day too. She got a hug and kiss from President Bush."



Photo by MSgt. Tony Taylor
CHIEF to CHIEF — Lois Hickie (left) teamed with President Bush to pin CMSgt. Terry Hickie.



Photo by SFC Eric Wedeking
VIP VIEW — SSgt. Peter Hinton and his daughter Rachel watch for President Bush.

stringing temporary wiring for a sizeable press room for the President's visit. "I think he's the right man for the job."

Also, Bush's visit was significant because West Virginia was singled out to represent the National Guard and Reserve's 1.3 million men and women from across the nation and territories.

The president also held a roundtable discussion with area employers of National Guard men and women. Bush told both troops and employers that he believes the National Guard is stretched thin.

Bush noted the 130th Airlift Wing's recent return from Eu-

rope after 33 years. Bush also announced the reunion to a national audience.

"Hopefully, I'll be able to retire with him as my Commander-in-Chief," added Eshbaugh, who serves as his unit's public health technician. "Back in 1968, I knew that Airman Bush's father was involved in politics, but I never would have imagined I was going through basic training with a future President of the United States."

Concluding his three days of military visits to Fort Stewart, Ga., Norfolk Naval Air Station,

asked Airman Bush to talk to me," he recalled. "We went into a room and sat down on two footlockers and he told me the importance of working together as a team, so I stayed with it. He was always concerned about the other airmen."

"He's a genuine leader and a man of integrity," Eshbaugh added. "Those characteristics he had then have grown. Now he wants to work to unite the country."

Eshbaugh said the most humbling experience was the realization that the President remem-

bered him after 33 years. Bush also announced the reunion to a national audience.

asked Airman Bush to talk to me," he recalled. "We went into a room and sat down on two footlockers and he told me the importance of working together as a team, so I stayed with it. He was always concerned about the other airmen."



EYE on the ENEMY — Oregon Army Guard PFC Darren Buchholz (right) eyes a target downrange as Texas PFC James Pomeroy watches. Guard soldiers (above) practice their sniper skills under the watchful eye of SFC Ben Dolan (rear).

Now accredited, the Guard's sniper school tests select marksmen's mental and physical skills

Without Warning, Without Remorse

By MSgt. Bob Haskell, *National Guard Bureau*

To the naked eye, a six-foot man standing 628 meters away in front of a tree line is little more than a figment of a soldier's imagination.

Killing that man with the first, cold-barrel shot from a high-powered rifle with a telescopic sight would be the ultimate test for the specialized soldiers that the National Guard trains on the open ranges and in the woods of central Arkansas, a few miles north of Little Rock.

The National Guard Sniper School, established in 1993 at Camp Joseph T. Robinson, has come of age in one important way. The U.S. Army accredited it last December. It will soon get the chance to train active Army soldiers in the deadly art and science of deliberately stalking and killing the enemy without remorse and from distances that are hard to fathom.

"This is a dream come true. It will be a prestigious thing for us to run soldiers through this school so they can get their B-4 sniper certification," observed Army Guard SFC Ben Dolan, 35, the chief instructor. He is a

thoughtful, soft-spoken sort who has completed Marine Corps and U.S. Army sniper training. He knows, but does not publicly share, some dark stories about the business of being a sniper.

Active duty soldiers from the 7th Special Forces Group will undergo sniper training at Camp Robinson in May, said Lt. Col. Carlton Smith, the National Guard Marksmanship Training Unit's chief of operations. Citizen-soldiers from the Army Guard's 29th Infantry Division who are slated to serve later this year in Bosnia will train in July. The school will also conduct two pilot courses in counter-sniper tactics for the Air National Guard's security forces this year.

"Run" is a key word. The Guard infantry soldiers who have passed the two-part course that is modeled on the Army's five-week sniper school at Fort Benning, Ga., know it as a test

of their physical and mental endurance.

There is a lot more to the training than shooting at targets more than a quarter of a mile away, even though a recent class expended more than 9,000 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition in two weeks.

Students must score 70 percent on the Army Physical Fitness Test to get in. Six-mile runs in the morning, countless pushups and sit-ups, and forced marches with 60-pound packs are part of the drill. Only the strong survive.

Twenty-one reported for the first two weeks of marksmanship training in February. Eleven graduated and earned the right to return within the next year for two more weeks of field craft — the skills in camouflage and stalking that are required to see and perhaps kill the enemy without being seen or killed themselves.

That's a typical attrition rate, said 1st Sgt. Jim Green, who made it through the course when he was 52. "It darned near killed me," he added about the school that is meant for the young.

Approximately 48 men make it through the two phases each

year, said Smith who estimated that "with the proper funding and staff we could probably fully train 100 people per year."

"The second phase is a lot more stressful than Phase I," offered Nebraska Army Guard SSgt. Kenneth Winn, 25, another former Marine who has recently completed the Camp Robinson course. "You and your partner are carrying your weapons systems and 65-pound packs, including the [camouflage] ghillie suits. You're out on field problems for two days at a time. You have to have a sound mind and body."

So why do we still need snipers during this era of high-tech warfare?

Most light infantry battalions have three two-man teams — snipers and observers — who serve two basic functions. Their primary purpose is still to kill enemy soldiers, and instill fear in many others, from long distances. The secondary mission is to evaluate an enemy's strength and movement as their commander's forward eyes and ears.

The second function has become as critical as the first, observed SSgt. David Broseus, one

of two instructors from Fort Benning who monitored February's training at Camp Robinson.

"We need snipers more than ever to infiltrate enemy positions and gather information and to take out targets with no collateral [or unnecessary] damage," he said. "Collateral damage has become a big concern because of the Army's peace-keeping missions."

"Sometimes it's best to put a sniper in a visible position to act as a deterrent — as a force protection over-watch," Broseus added. "Every time you have troops on the ground, you should have a sniper over-watching them."

However, FM 23-10, the Army's "Sniper Training" field manual, makes no bones about the primary purpose. "The sniper must be able to calmly and deliberately kill targets that may not pose an immediate threat to him. ... The sniper must not be susceptible to emotions such as anxiety or remorse."

The work is not nearly as exciting as Hollywood would have people believe, said Broseus.

"A sniper team is more likely to have to take out a machine



Photos by MSgt. Bob Haskell



TOUGH TRAINING — Marksmanship is not the only skill tested at the Guard's Sniper School at Camp Robinson. Soldiers seeking the coveted sniper certificate must also be physically ready to endure daily PT runs (below) and an obstacle course (left).

Photos by MSgt. Bob Haskell



gunner to slow an enemy's rate of fire," he added. "You will not be looking for people like Saddam Hussein."

How well does the National Guard school prepare people to do that duty? Very well, maintained SSgt. Tom Dow, the other instructor from Fort Benning.

"The intensity of the training is the same as it is at Benning," he explained. "These Guard people put in the same number of hours and days during their two two-week phases as we do in five straight weeks. We take the weekends off. They don't."

And the Camp Robinson facility is equal to the task, he added.

"I'm amazed at how large this place is," marveled Dow. "It was definitely a surprise. This is not the little National Guard armory operation I was expecting."

Building 4901 on Camp Robinson is a modest metal structure, with just two windows, that houses the Army's only accredited sniper school besides the one in Georgia.

The class's motto "Without Warning — Without Remorse" chalked onto the blackboard in February could also be the National Guard school's motto. It offers the students few second chances.

You can't score 70 percent on your PT test? You're gone. You can't estimate the range to your targets? You're history. You can't hit 14 of 20 targets 300 to 600 meters away during day or night record fire? Good-bye.

Ben Dolan and the half-dozen other instructors know that lives are at stake and that sniper teams can wind up in the darnedest places when the weather is at its worst.

They may even have to put up with snakes.

"We're teaching a unique skill. If the students can't handle it for two weeks at a time here, they can't handle a real-world mission," Dolan insisted. "We train as if we're going to war the next day. I'm not giving anyone a certificate I wouldn't want to go into the woods with tomorrow."

INSIDE THE SNIPER SCHOOL

For Dutch Army SFC Erik de Waal two weeks at the Guard's physically-demanding sniper school was a change of pace

Long Distance DUTCHMAN

By MSgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

Sniper has been a dirty word in The Kingdom of the Netherlands since the German army occupied the small European nation also known as Holland for most of World War II.

So why did SFC Erik de Waal from the Dutch Army spend two February weeks in middle America discovering the hard way how the National Guard trains snipers?

Well, the Dutch Army does have infantry experts at "shooting a long distance," explained the personable de Waal, who has been a long-distance shooting instructor for six years.

Dutch infantry companies, he said, have six such two-man teams trained to hit man-size targets with .338 caliber Accuracy International rifles up to 1,200 meters away. That's more than six-tenths of a mile.

Also, de Waal's battalion commander, Lt. Col. Mart de Cruyf, wants to know how the Yanks train people in essentially the same skills.

That's why the senior sergeant, quickly nicknamed "The Dutchman," spent two weeks shooting and running and shooting some more at Camp Robinson in central Arkansas as a student at the National Guard's Sniper School.

It was as good as training at the U.S. Army Sniper School at Fort Benning, Ga., because the Army accredited the Guard's seven-year-old school last December.

The 32-year-old de Waal, a soldier for 15 years, discovered that American soldiers train a bit differently than Dutch soldiers.

There is, for example, a lot of running. "Here you do everything in a rush," he observed two days before graduating from Phase I of the two-part school on Feb. 23. "You run, run, run and then you lay down and shoot."

"To us shooting is more of a science. We take five weeks to do what the Americans do in two weeks," said de Waal. "And we don't do all of this physical training."

He was not complaining. In fact, he earned the respect of the staff and other students while doing countless pushups and sit-ups and climbing, crawling and sprinting through an obstacle course during six-mile runs most mornings.

De Waal had not run hard since undergoing right knee surgery six months before traveling to Arkansas. But he did not miss a beat at Camp Robinson, claimed sniper school 1st Sgt. Jim Green.

"I can run now, but it was pretty tough," confessed de Waal.

There was also a challenge with the language, added de Waal who speaks virtually flawless English — as it is spoken in England.

"I know how to shoot, but I had to read and explain everything in American English," he said. "American English is different from English English."

Erik de Waal has been around. He is stationed in Germany with the Dutch Army's 41st Mechanized Brigade. He has

also served in Bosnia, Cambodia and Thailand, he explained. His trip to Arkansas, however, was his first visit to the United States.

His impressions? "There are a lot of big cars. And you can buy a lot of fast food here," de Waal said. "The fuel is very cheap. It costs about \$1 a liter in Holland."

He also discovered that Arkansas is

experiencing a wetter and colder winter than he expected to encounter in the South.

"I thought it would be warm. I didn't bring very many warm clothes," de Waal said. "I had to buy some clothes after I arrived."

The Americans have been friendly, he explained, and his partner, Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Guion from Vermont, has helped with his English.

De Waal plans to return to Arkansas to learn the stalking, camouflage, and target location techniques taught during Phase II at the National Guard's sniper school.

He will expect to do a lot more running and plenty of walking during two more weeks of intensive training in the art of "shooting a long distance" American style.



'The Dutchman': SFC Erik de Waal.

INSIDE THE MEMORIAL

Carrying on Dad's legacy

Rick Watkins' children, like many others, are having good, bad days

By SFC Eric Wedeking
National Guard Bureau

As they played with their toys around the Virginia Air Guard's 203rd Red Horse Flight monument in Virginia Beach, the Watkins boys, Joshua, 8, and Colton, 4, knew their father would not be coming home again.

They understood on that second Friday in March that their dad, Maj. Rick Watkins, 35, had died with 20 other National Guardsmen in an airplane crash in Georgia on March 3.

The boys' mother had already begun taking the steps to help them get on with their lives.

They were putting on a courageous

show, but it was not easy for them, said Colleen Davis, Watkins' former wife.

"They're having their good and bad days. It still doesn't seem quite real yet," added Davis as they waited outside the 203rd's headquarters building for new identification cards to be processed.

Davis said her sons were trying to find a silver lining around the dark cloud of losing their father, commander of the 17 other civil engineers who were flying home following two weeks of annual training in Florida.

"My older son said to me, 'God must have had one big [construction] project for daddy to design in Heaven so that's why God took him,'" Davis said.

The Watkins boys and their mother are not alone in their loss. The 18 airmen who died left a total of 37 children -- toddlers to high school students.

Davis said her older son has avidly read the newspapers about the accident and about preparations for the memorial service. Also, teachers and students at Joshua's elementary school are offering their support.

"Right now, everything Joshua touches at school is golden. The teachers and students there have been great," Davis said. "I got them back to school to get them back into a routine and some sort of normalcy."

Four-year-old Colton is expected to have a harder time remembering his father. Davis said her oldest son is already taking responsibility for preserving the memory of "Dad."

"Joshua said he's going to tell his brother stories about his dad so he knows about him," Davis added. "I think that will help them both."

Davis holds no ill will toward the Air National Guard or the military for the death of her sons' father.

"We've all been around the military here, and we know that this kind of thing can happen. It just happened," Davis added. "The military is doing everything they can to help the families and continue helping them."

Joshua carried that a step farther.

"I want to work for the military when I'm old enough," he said while playfully sword fighting with his brother.

Davis whispered that Joshua would certainly carry on his father's legacy.

"Joshua is the spitting image of his father," she said.



Photo by SFC Eric Wedeking

DEDICATED TO DAD -- Josh (left) and Colton Watkins, sons of the late Maj. Rick Watkins, place a wreath on a Red Horse statue



Final Call UP

Nearly 4,000

congregate

to mourn, celebrate

fallen Guard comrades

By SFC Eric Wedeking
National Guard Bureau

Tears and tributes punctuated three weekend memorial services in Virginia and Florida that honored 21 members of the National Guard who perished in a March 3 military airplane crash in rural Georgia.

Governors from both states in which the units are located personally offered their condolences. Letters from President George W. Bush, a former Texas Air National Guard fighter pilot, were read to those who mourned.

An estimated 4,000 family members, friends, military people and other dignitaries poured into the cavernous Rock Church in Virginia Beach, Va., on Saturday to pay their respects.

Nearly 1,000 attended Sunday's services in airplane hangers in Lakeland and Jacksonville, Fla.

The 18 Air National Guard civil engineers from Virginia's 203rd Red Horse Flight and the three Army

IN MEMORY -- Lt. Col. Thomas Turlip (left), 203rd commander, eulogizes his 'lost Horseman.' The wife and daughter (above) of SSgt. Gregory Skurupey observe his portrait.

Guard aviators from Florida's 1st Battalion, 171st Aviation C-23 Sherpa detachment were remembered at all three services.

The Army Guard flight crew was transporting the one officer and 17 enlisted members of the Air Guard construction unit, formed in 1985, back to Virginia following two weeks of annual training at Hurlburt Field in Florida.

Virginia Gov. James Gilmore III told the families at Virginia Beach that their losses from one of the worst peacetime tragedies in the National Guard's 364 years have affected the entire country.

"Today, we come together in this magnificent church to remember and to honor good men who lost their lives doing something they believed



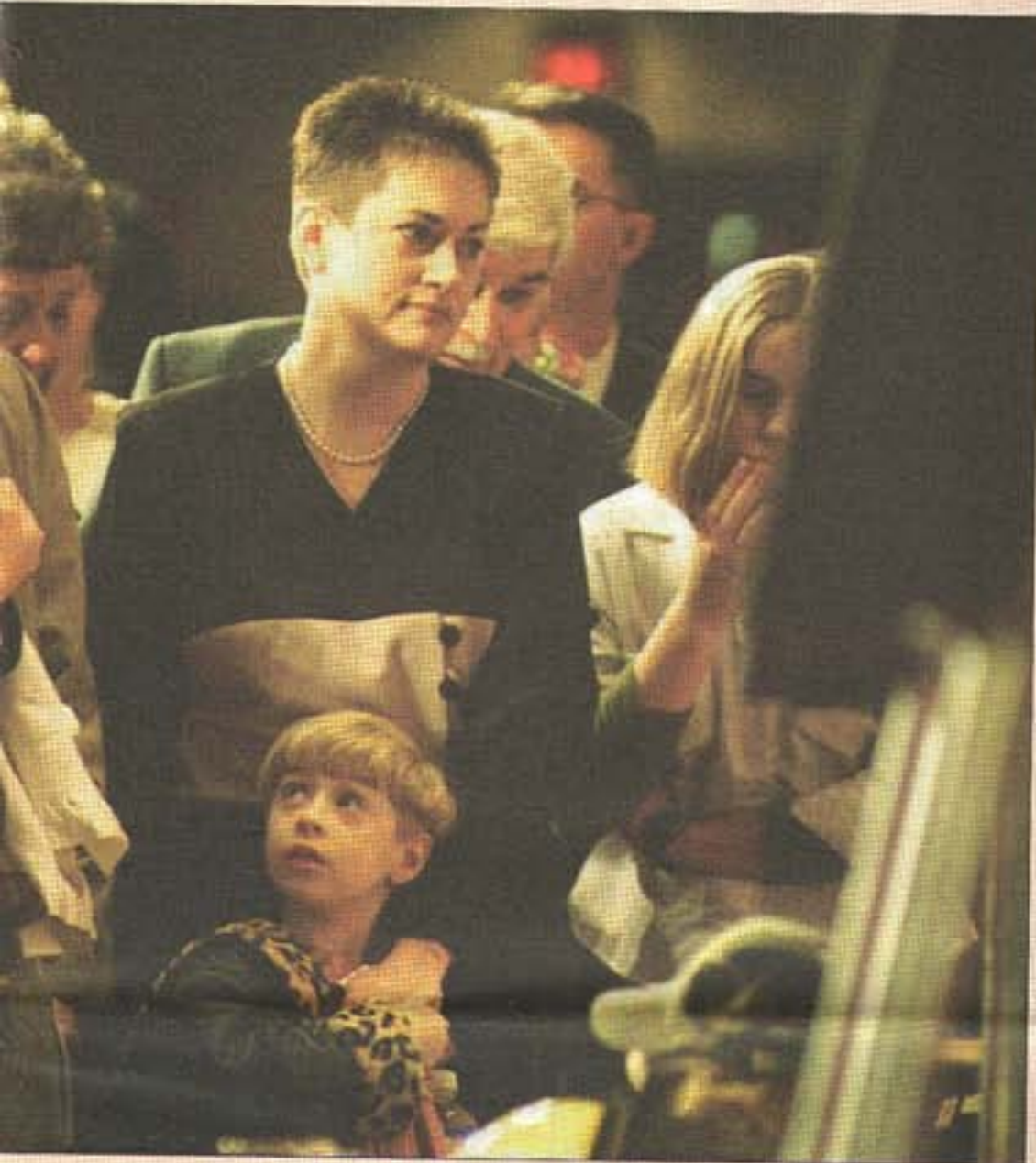


Photo by TSgt. Kenneth D. Wright

in to their core: serving their country, their state and their communities," Gilmore said. "The pain of this tragic loss has touched far more than communities in Virginia, Florida, North Carolina and Georgia. It has touched the nation."

Families also heard messages of condolence from the nation's leaders, including two letters read by Virginia National Guard Adjutant General Brig. Gen. Claude A. Williams, who hosted the service.

"We mourn together with their loss," wrote Bush. "They personified the term 'citizen-soldier.'"

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld stated in a letter to the families that the citizen-aimen and soldiers would be remembered. "These were true patriots serving our country," he said. "Their contributions will not be forgotten."

During the 90-minute Virginia memorial, families viewed poster-sized photographs of their loved ones. Red baseball caps bearing the 203rd Red Horse Flight logo and personal items

were also on display.

The families were presented shadow boxes containing folded U.S. and Virginia flags and the citizen-aimen's ranks, ribbons and awards. Members of the unit made those boxes by hand.

After a solitary bagpiper concluded the service with a rendition of "Amazing Grace," the crowd flowed outside to watch four Virginia Air National Guard F-16 jets from Richmond's 192nd Fighter Wing roar over the church. A single fighter peeled off in the "missing man" formation.

Friends of the deceased airmen expressed the hope that the memorial services will start of the healing process for the thousands of people who are still feeling the pain.

The accident was a devastating blow to the community. Thirty-seven children ranging from toddlers to high school students are without fathers.

"Especially with the family and the unit members, it's going to give them some closure," said Patricia Horrocks



PAYING RESPECTS - Family members grieve (left and below) during memorial services held at Rock Church in Virginia Beach, Va., March 10.



of Virginia Beach and wife of MSgt. Jeff Horrocks. Mrs. Horrocks is the 203rd's Family Support Group coordinator.

Other dignitaries included Virginia U.S. Sen. John Warner, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and Gen. Michael Ryan, U.S. Air Force chief of staff. Lt. Gen. Russell Davis, chief of the National Guard Bureau, and Maj. Gen. Paul Weaver Jr.,

director of the Air National Guard, also attended.

Every branch of the U.S. armed forces was represented. It was a testimony to the joint effort for aiding the families after the tragedy.

Army Chief of Staff Gen. Eric Shinseki said all service leaders were genuinely concerned for the families and troops. "We had our people on that aircraft," he said. "I came to pay my respects."

Three pairs of Army boots and camouflage helmets were prominently displayed next to memorials for the 18 Air Guard members at Virginia Beach.

Lt. Col. Thomas Turlip, the 203rd's commander, urged people to embrace the future.

"They were all fine men," said Turlip of the airmen he called "my lost Horsemen."

"I shared in their pride with serving in the National Guard and the 203rd Red Horse Flight," Turlip added. "I have seen us come together in time of grief. We are now bonded together eternally."

Similar sentiments were expressed about the three Army Guard aviators - Chief Warrant Officers Johnny Duce, 49, and Erik Larson, 34, and SSgt. Robert Ward Jr., 36, on Sunday in Florida.

In Jacksonville, Gov. Jeb Bush compared their deaths to those who died during the Civil War battle at Gettysburg, Pa.

"They leave a legacy for all of us to remember," said the brother of President Bush. "You should know that this duty and this sacrifice was not something that was just thrown away. They are an inspiration for all of us."

"They were ordinary, yet extraordinary human beings," offered Maj. Gen. Ronald Harrison, Florida's adjutant general.

The three represented a cross section of the modern National Guard.

Duce was an active duty veteran of Vietnam. Ward first joined the Marines in 1982 and served in the Persian Gulf with the active Army during Operation Desert Storm. Both worked full-time for the Florida Guard.

Larson was a full-time commercial airline pilot and a traditional Guard soldier who became an officer in the Alaska Army Guard. He worked with troubled youth as a counselor with the Alaskan Youth Corps before moving with his wife to Florida in 1997.

He began flying for the Florida Army Guard as a warrant officer in January 1999, according to his biography that includes his aviator's epithet:

"One thing I like about flying is that I can always find the sunshine."



SPORTS

■ CISM: Forging Friendships Through Sport

SPORTS SHORTS

Idaho to host ANG softball tourney

Members of the Idaho Air Guard's 124th Wing in Boise are already preparing for the 2001 Air National Guard Softball Tournament, Aug. 15-18.

As in past years, the tourney is open to all Guardmembers in up to six divisions: men's open, women's open, men's over-35, men's over-45, co-ed and fast pitch.

For years, the tournament was the single largest collection of Air Guardmembers in one place for a morale, welfare and recreation activity. However, attendance has fallen off in recent years. Last year's tournament in Duluth, Minn., hosted 64 teams, while the 1998 tourney in Dayton, Ohio, boasted 110 teams.

"The more teams we have, the better it will be for everyone," said Lt. Col. Robert Pietras, tournament director.

In addition to many planned extracurricular activities, the tourney's format is being modified in response to feedback from past tournaments. Instead of double elimination, every team is guaranteed to play in at least three games.

This year's tourney will also feature a home run derby and individual skills competition.

"We are pulling out all the stops to make this the best Air Guard softball tournament ever," Pietras said.

For additional information, including hotel and car rental accommodations, log on to the official tournament web site at www.mountainhome.af.mil/softball. The website also includes information on weather conditions, as well as funding ideas for unit trips.

To register, please call Pietras at (208) 828-6392 or tourney co-director MSgt. Kathy Lukas at (208) 422-5840.

World's top military skiers compete, forge friendships



■ Minnesota's Spc. Kara Salmela scores silver in women's biathlon

By SSgt. Bryan D. Suits
Vermont National Guard

The weather cooperated and the competition was intense at the Conseil International du Sport Militaire 43rd World Military Ski Championships at Stowe and Jericho, Vt., from March 8 to 11.

The games featured world class athletes from 18 nations, and provided an exciting preview of the 2002 Winter Olympics.

The CISM games bring together military personnel from around the world to compete in several traditional alpine and nordic ski events: cross country, giant slalom, biathlon and military patrol.

Conseil International du Sport Militaire was organized in Europe shortly after World War II as a means to foster "friendship through sport."

The nordic events were held at the Ethan Allen Firing Range. The range, the site of Vermont's Mountain Warfare School, is one of the premier cross-country ski and biathlon facilities in North America.

While no U.S. male biathletes finished in the top 20, Army Spc. Kara Salmela, from Duluth, Minn., placed second in the women's biathlon. Her time of 23:40.9 for the 7.5-kilometer course was only 11 seconds off of the gold medal pace set by Slovenia's Andreja Grasic.

Salmela, a member of the Army's World Class Athlete Program, looks forward to Salt Lake City in 2002.

"I'm getting stronger all the time and the competition makes you mentally tougher," she said.

As comrades on the field of friendly competition, the athletes went home as living proof that CISM's motto "friendship through sport" remains alive.

SILVER LINING -- Spc. Kara Salmela won the silver medal in the women's 7.5-k sprint biathlon.

Photo by PFC Jody M. Metzger

NEWS MAKERS

Compiled by MSgt. John Malthaner
National Guard Bureau

It's not every day when a T-6 trainer aircraft and an F-16 fighter jet team up for a flyby. And it's not every day when father and son are each flying their own aircraft in the same flyby. But it all happened at the recent dedication of Fox Stephens Field at Gilmer, a town in northeast Texas.

The fly-by came about after retired Lt. Col. Randy Presley of nearby Mount Pleasant, Texas, received an invitation to provide a fly-by marking the occasion Gilmer Municipal Airport was officially renamed after SR-71 "Blackbird" test pilot Col. Bobby "Fox" Stephens, who hailed from Gilmer. The Texas Air Guard's 182nd Fighter Squadron, commanded by Lt. Col. Jack Presley, also received an invitation to provide a fly-by for the event.

The elder Presley is an active member of the North American Trainer Association and regularly flies the T-6 "Texan," the same type of aircraft he flew almost 40 years ago when he joined the Air Force.

"He joined in the early 1950s to serve in the Korean War," the younger Presley related. "He was stationed in Taegu, Korea, where he flew the multi-role F-84 Thunderjet. During his combat tour, he received the Distinguished Flying Cross and two Air Medals."

The Presleys and their aircrafts converged without a hitch. To fly together, the F-16 had to slow down.

"The flyby appeared to be the highlight of the show," the younger Presley reported. "I know it was an event my father and I will always remember and tell lots of stories about -- like any good fighter pilots."

New Mexico Air National Guard MSgt John A. Williams has been named the Region 1 Production Recruiter of the Year for 2000.

Region 1 encompasses the Western states as well as the Pacific states and U. S. territories.

"The greatest satisfaction I get as a recruiter is when I walk across the flight line or the base and I see all the people that I brought in," said Williams. "And I get to know everybody."

Williams said the biggest challenge that he and the two other Air Guard recruiters face is they have to cover the entire state of New Mexico.

"As a unit we're doing pretty good (in recruiting). Last year we met and surpassed our goal of 100 percent as set forth by the Guard Bureau," said Williams. "We were at 100.4 percent."

Some of the highlights of Williams's recruiting efforts for the past year are:

- Recruited 63 people into New Mexico's 150th Fighter Wing;
- Conducted recruiting visits at Cannon AFB, Holloman AFB, and Kirtland AFB, N.M.
- Developed and executed the wing's Unit Referral Program.

Williams joined the 150th in June 1990 as a photographer with the communications squadron. In 1994, he was selected the unit's Outstanding Airman of the Year. He became a recruiter in December 1997. He is currently the recruiting office supervisor.



A T-6 'Texan,' piloted by retired Lt. Col. Randy Presley, and an F-16, piloted by his son Lt. Col. Jack Presley, perform a fly-by.



New Mexico MSgt. John Williams knows something about recruiting.



Hawaii Army Guard ecologist Trae Menard plants some rare *Schiedea Adamantis*.

It is the plant that almost slipped into extinction. And as Diamond Head Crater undergoes renovations to accommodate more visitors, the Hawaii Army Guard is ensuring the rare and endangered *Schiedea Adamantis* sticks around for future generations.

The *Schiedea Adamantis* is a native Hawaiian plant so rare it does not even carry a common name. Currently, the only naturally occurring population in the world is found on the rim of Diamond Head Crater near the southern shore of Oahu.

Thanks to the efforts of Trae Menard and the Aloha State Army Guard's environmental staff, the plant has been plucked from extinction.

Menard started monitoring the plant in 1998 when the Hawaii Guard hired him to be their new ecosystems manager.

"The numbers have taken a dive in the last 10 years," Menard said. "In 1990, there were about 244 plants on the rim. In 1997, there were 60 to 80 living plants, and in 1998, there were 30. Last year the number of living plants was approximately 20. In October, the number went down to 11."

"That trend proved to me that something had to be done or we would lose the plant forever," he added.

Menard teamed up with botanists and planted 50 seedlings, 32 of which are still alive. A further planting produced 88 more plants.

"If we establish a population at Battery Harlow down slope from the native population, these plants will grow and produce seeds to continue the restoration of the species," Menard said.

If you happen to start up a conversation with Massachusetts Air Guard SrA. Quincy C. Brown, don't be surprised to see him begin sketching. Also, don't be offended if he begins to ignore you.

In fact, you might just take it as a compliment. For you see, you have just become his muse. He has listened to you and something you said has conjured up an image in his mind and he wants to get it down on paper before it's gone.

"I get ideas from all over," said Brown, who is a videographer in the 102nd Communications Squadron and a sophomore at the Massachusetts College of Art. "And when I get an idea, I'll sort of 'zone out' and have to get the idea on paper."

Brown has been immersed in the love of art since the age of 6 and says two of his biggest early influences were two uncles.

"My older uncle, Allin Moss, went to college in Washington state. He draws and paints. My younger uncle, Darran Moss, drew cartoon characters. So I got my earliest influences in both the classical and the non-classical," he recalled.

Eventually, Brown wants to become an animator. "With my animation, I will be able to see my work come to life, move and talk." Next in his art career, he is hoping to work for a large animation studio, such as Warner Brothers or the Japanese company, Menga. Eventually, he wants to open his own animation studio.

Texas parachute packers have earned the respect of many paratroopers

By SFC Brenda Benner
Texas National Guard

An active duty Air Force unit, facing high expenses for run-of-the-mill services, decided there had to be a better way. Army Reserve airborne soldiers, facing a possible loss of their jump status, knew they had to find a remedy fast.

Both units, plus others a thousand miles away, have found their deliverance in the National Guard's parachute riggers.

The Texas Army Guard's Parachute Packing and Maintenance Shop, consisting of full-time and traditional soldiers from the 49th Armored Division's 143rd Infantry, (Long Range Surveillance Detachment) and also of Company G, 143rd Infantry, supports all types of airborne units in need, regardless of their location or branch of service.

The facility, located at the Texas Guard's Camp Mabry headquarters in Austin, is the only military rigger shop in Texas.

The PPMS has a maintenance section and personnel qualified in re-stitching and hole-patching damaged canopies, kit bags and the like. Entire parachute kits are repaired as well as packed.

Since the Texas Guard's 71st Airborne Brigade cased its colors in the 1970s and since the closure of Fort Hood's parachute rigger shop more than a decade ago, Mabry's shop now hunts for business. It not only supports active-duty and reserve Army units, but also the instructors of the Survival Evasion Resistance and Escape unit, an active-duty Air Force detachment from Brook AFB, San Antonio.

"We have customers from as far away as Nebraska and Illinois," said Sgt. James Whitmore, an Austin-based rigger who drills with Co. G. "We store, inspect, and pack nearly 300 main canopies and their accompanying reserves."

SFC Mark Dunlap, also of

Leap of FAITH



Co. G, is the rigger shop supervisor, and one of the most experienced jumpers in the Texas Army Guard with more than 300 military jumps.

"Our shop is one of four regional parachute support facilities set up by the National Guard Bureau for technical and safety oversight," said Dunlap. "The other three are in Alabama, West Virginia and Utah."

The Air Force's SERE detachment instructors rely on Mabry's rigger shop to pack their chutes and to also provide technical support at drop zones.

"They do not have a facility that packs personnel rigs for intentional jumping," said Dunlap. "Air Force riggers only pack the parachutes going into aircraft ejection seats, not the type a person would use on his back"

Whitmore says that of all of

the PPMS's clients, the Air Force's SERE unit seems especially appreciative of his shop's services.

"They've had a difficult time in the past, they've had to contract through civilian skydiving organizations. Not only can we pack a larger quantity of chutes, but we pack the round canopy static line chutes that most civilian organization don't."

SERE instructor TSgt. Timothy Kapp couldn't agree more.

"The guys at Mabry have all of the experience and all of the machines necessary to do the job correctly," said Kapp. "They have a large light table that they use to find tiny holes, tears and most types of contaminants on the fabric."

"We've counted on this National Guard shop for over two years," he added. "We trust what



Photos by SFC Brenda Benner

PACKING PERFECTION — Sgt. John Naputi (left) shakes a chute. Naputi (above, right) and PFC Daniel Yopez pin canopy fabric.



they are doing to our parachutes. Not only have they saved us a lot of money over the course of 200 parachute packings, but we feel more at ease knowing it is they who have us covered."

Sgt. John Naputi, of the LRS Detachment, has packed chutes since 1985. He's proud to wear the rigger's red hat.

Naputi belongs to a small group of rigger comrades. U.S. Army Quartermaster Center records indicate that less than 1,400 riggers support airborne operations worldwide.

Currently, the active duty Army has rigger shops in only nine states, with a large concentration of those facilities at Fort Bragg, N.C.

There's certainly no overabundance of riggers, and no shortage of parachutes. Somewhere in the world, there's always an airborne soldier floating to Earth.

"It seems like we're always busy," said Naputi. "We average 15 to 20 pack jobs a day, plus any maintenance tasks we do."

Riggers not only pack chutes, but also have many responsibilities out at the drop zones.

"There are several positions that only a rigger can fill," said

Naputi. "We provide a malfunction sergeant and someone to issue out the chutes. We also transport the parachutes to the sites and bring them back with us. Like weapons, they must never leave our control. We assume total responsibility."

"I will be sure -- always."

These words, from "The Rigger's Creed," sum up the dedication and high level of skill riggers put into their often tedious and repetitive work.

Naputi admits that jumpers have to ultimately accept the fact that although they had nothing to do with the chutes before they get them in their hands, that everything regarding their parachute is perfect.

Another excerpt from the sacred rigger's pledge offers a stark reminder.

"I will never let the idea that a piece of work is 'good enough' make me a potential murderer through a careless mistake or oversight, for I know that there can be no compromise with perfection."

It's perfection that comes fold-by-fold, 30 of them in the 20 minutes that it takes to pack one MC1-1 series military canopy.

It's this perfection that has earned the riggers the confidence of their customers.

"We trust them every week," said SrA. Jeff Martin, an Air Force SERE instructor. "Sergeant Dunlap and his guys are the greatest."

The Army Reserve's 345th Psychological Operations Company, based in Dallas, is a relatively new customer. An upcoming Kosovo deployment has made keeping a current jump status a high priority.

SSgt. Billy Lambert, a psychological operations team chief with the 345th, said that a major benefit of being a customer is



RIG GIG — Sgt. James Whitmore stows the 30 suspension lines into a parachute pack.

that his unit can "strap hang," or basically tag along with the riggers when they support other airborne missions.

If not for the support of Mabry's rigger shop, the 345th would continue sending their parachutes to Fort Bragg, a process that demands more money and a lot more time.

Lambert added that there's more to this unusual relationship born of necessity than merely saving time and money.

"Considering the enormous amount of experience these riggers have, and the fact they have Sergeant Dunlap as their jumpmaster, we have the opportunity to learn a lot more."

Before the riggers lay out the parachutes for inspection and packing, they suspend them from the drying tower during a process called "shaking the chutes."

"If we didn't shake them out before putting them on the packing tables, there's no telling what would happen," said Naputi.

"Over the years I've had everything from a live bird, to snakes, football-sized rocks, inch long ants, and even field mice drop out of these chutes," he added. "Here in Texas, we mostly get lots of grasshoppers."

Naputi recalled an incident years ago in Thailand when a Cobra was determined to stay in a parachute while at the drop zone. "It flared up at us," said Naputi. "That was scary."

After the shake down, the riggers lay the parachute kits out on 50-foot pack tables for a series of line checks to untangle

and untwist the 30 suspension lines. They inspect every square inch of the canopies and every component of the system.

Each panel section of the canopy is meticulously folded over onto the others before the critical work of 's-folding' begins.

"Laying out the chutes and packing them requires a lot of patience because you'll work the same 50 feet of table day in and day out," said Whitmore. "You must have a detail-oriented mindset. One simple missed step within the process can prove disastrous."

Quality control is ensured by a seven point "in-process" inspection in which fellow riggers check and double check one another's work during seven particular phases of completion.

By regulation, riggers must jump using the same parachutes they've packed. This brings a new twist to the phrase "working for a living." Whitmore references this adrenaline pumped activity as saving one's own life over and over again.

Whitmore, like other riggers, is proud of the fact that his competency is put to a real test every time a parachute is activated.

"The infantry uses blanks and medical personnel use moulage kits for injury simulation, but every time we jump -- it's a 'live fire' situation for us."

PFC Daniel Yepez, 25, the newest member of the shop, awaits his chance for a seat at jump school, and subsequently for rigger school.

Although Yepez doesn't actually pack any of the chutes, he has gained valuable "hands on" experience.

"Until he becomes a certified rigger, he will never perform a 'live' packing job," said Naputi.

Yepez, who considers himself a detail-oriented neat freak, is eager for his turn.

"I'll have more opportunities to jump as a rigger than just being an airborne-qualified soldier," he said.

Sewing time for air time. It seems like a reasonable trade off -- to hang suspended by the very stitches he sews.

"I didn't think I'd ever be on a sewing machine for an official Army task," he said. "I guess I'll have to sew on my own patches and buttons in the future, because my mom knows I'm learning to sew."

INSIDE TEXAS PARACHUTE RIGGERS

Yogi. Smokey. Neither has a thing on the Texas Army Guard's paratrooping Air Bear

Air Bear

By SFC Brenda Benner
Texas National Guard

Pound-for-pound he is, without a doubt, the toughest airborne soldier in the Texas Army National Guard.

His past is filled with many exciting missions, including jumps with Italian paratroopers, the U.S. Army's 5th Special Forces Group, and the Marine Corps' 4th Reconnaissance Battalion. Fellow paratroopers look up to him as the epitome of airborne grit despite his short stature and his little plastic nose.

Who is this highly decorated soldier? He is Air Bear, the official mascot of Camp Mabry's Parachute Packing Maintenance Shop, and he has a military identification card to prove it.

Air Bear wears his parachute pack, jump wings, battle dress uniform, and burgundy beret at all times--constantly prepared for last minute missions.

His first jump was in 1986 in Texas, but his duty assignments have taken him all over the globe. He has jumped the skies over Australia, Germany, Italy, and even the Gulf of Mexico. Using his modified three-foot diameter artillery flare parachute, Air Bear has logged 23 jumps during his airborne career.

Many more are sure to follow.

This rugged four-pound paratrooper originated from a flea-market years before his bear cousins showed up at military exchanges across the country.

Sponsored by parachute rigger Sgt. Baldemair Garcia, Air Bear decided that becoming an airborne soldier and rigger was just the type of excitement he was looking for.

Although Air Bear trails his fellow riggers in total number of jumps, they usually let him lead the way.

"After my chute is fully deployed," said

Garcia, "I help Air Bear pop his chute. He needs a little help because of his short arms. Air Bear usually lands first, so I follow him down as closely as possible."

Some of Air Bear's landings test him to his limits. His roughest jump yet was in Australia, where his parachute dragged him along the ground when he hit the drop zone.

He occasionally tumbles through sand, dirt, rocks, stickers, and water, proving he really is the toughest paratrooper around.

During airborne missions, paratroopers from other units who have heard of Air Bear, often ask for him by name.

Air Bear proudly represents both the United States and the Lone Star State as he flies the red, white and blue of the American and Texas flags from his chute's risers.

"He's such a celebrity," said SFC Mark Dunlap, the rigger shop's supervisor. "The others say, 'Wow, look at that. They have their own airborne mascot who jumps.'"

It's difficult not to smile and feel proud of -- and proud for -- this little bear as he floats down from the sky. He is a master at



Photo by SFC Brenda Benner

BEAR for DETAIL — Air Bear and an unnamed assistant keep an eye on how Texas Army Guard Sgt. Baldemair Garcia packs a chute.

boosting unit morale.

Air Bear doesn't spend all of his time in the spotlight though. As an honorary rigger, he watches over parachute packing procedures from his perch above the packing tables.

Anyone who knows Air Bear knows that he not only loves the thrill of jumping, but also the honor of serving his country.

Here's to you, Air Bear. May your chute be full, and your landings soft.



STATES

■ Getting Goggles ■ Honduran Helpers ■ D.C. Deployment

TEXAS

The next time 149th Fighter Wing instructors teach new pilots how to fly the F-16 Fighting Falcon, things will be different.

The new syllabus for the seven-month B Course, which began March 30, will include training with night vision goggles (NVG).

"This will be the first B Course class of student-pilots in the Air Force to go through NVG training," said Lt. Col. Jack Presley, commander of the wing's 182nd Fighter Squadron. "Including NVG training in the B Course was the number-one request of combat air forces."

The goggles greatly amplify sources of light, effectively letting their users see at night. However, pilots have to adapt and learn to look and identify things differently than they do in daylight.

According to Maj. John Kane, who helped develop the syllabus for the course, looking through the "soda straws" is the hard part.

"While it is a huge tactical advantage to see at night, there are some limitations to NVGs that must be addressed," he said.

This year the B Class is scheduled to graduate eight active-duty Air Force pilots, compared to just one last year.

"Going from one to eight active duty student pilots shows we have proven ourselves as part of the Total Force," Presley said.

MAINE

HEALING HANDS

Dr. (Lt. Col.) Henry Litz, a member of the Maine Air Guard's 101st Medical Squadron in Bangor, performs surgery on a Honduran man's foot following a motorcycle accident there. The Pine Tree State medical crew deployed to the Central American country as part of a medical readiness exercise.



Photo by MSgt. Christine Johnson

PENNSYLVANIA

Members of Company G, 104th Aviation deployed to Nicaragua recently to provide vital air support for Joint Task Force Sebaco, a multi-service task force comprised of U.S. Marines, active Army, Army Reserve and Army National Guard units.

The groups were brought together to construct two clinics and a school for three separate communities in central Nicaragua.

The Keystone State aviation crews, based at Fort Indiantown Gap, hauled more than one million pounds of cargo in less than 10 weeks.

In addition to the cargo, the Company G crews transported more than 2,000 passengers, while logging 300 flight hours.

All of this was accomplished with just two CH-47 Chinook helicopters and two flight crews -- not to mention a limited maintenance team.

Supporting the task force was not the crew's only duty, they also were called upon by the American Embassy to transport 25,000 pounds of medical supplies to Bluefields, Nicaragua.

The badly needed supplies were transported over a three-day period using specially installed long-range fuel tanks. With no fuel at the Bluefield airport, the 325-mile round trip flight was completed without refueling.

DISTRICT of COLUMBIA

By Capt. Sheldon Smith
District of Columbia National Guard

A highly specialized Army Guard mobile search operations team recently deployed to Bahrain in Southwest Asia to help guard U.S. Naval ships against the threat of terrorist attack.

The five-person team was created in response to a Navy Support Activity request for security forces that can inspect ships for bombs in certain high-risk ports.

"Our mission is to perform port security for the Naval commander in Bahrain. Our job is to x-ray vehicles, checking for drugs, bombs, etc.," said SSgt. Joseph Owens, a member of D.C.'s 273rd Military Police Company. "We'll check everything that goes onto Naval ships."

Since June 2000, five District Guardsmen have provided similar security at the Washington Navy Yard in support of Federal Protective Services. Their primary mission is to scan truck cargo bound for the Ronald Reagan Building in Washington for bombs.

"Everyone takes their job here very seriously," said Sgt. Lonnie Stancil. "If a vehicle were to come through here and we missed something, it would be our responsibility."

"We have the lives of many people in our hands," he added.

The team will remain deployed for several months. The FPS and Bahrain teams are the only Guard teams performing explosive detection.

"I'm proud to have this unique mission and to be able to perform duty with a sister service in



D.C. search specialists deployed to Bahrain.

Bahrain," said Maj. Gen. Warren L. Freeman, D.C.'s commanding general. "I'm even more proud of the soldiers who volunteered to be away from their families to serve their country."

"They will play an important role in combating terrorism in that area," the general concluded.



HISTORY

■ Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Korean War

Validated in Victory

Ten years after U.S. and coalition forces registered a resounding victory over Iraq during Desert Storm, activity in the Persian Gulf continues.

Now, the reports focus on Gulf War illnesses, Iraqi defiance of UN arms inspectors and Saddam Hussein's continued grip on power.

A decade ago, the news from the Persian Gulf centered on the achievements of America's military. A force that waited five months before launching a devastating 38-day air and artillery attack. Then, ground troops stepped in to deliver the final blow.

"(The Iraqi army went) from the fourth-largest army in the world to the second-largest army in Iraq in 100 hours," boasted Lt. Gen. Tom Kelly, the Joint Chiefs of Staff's director of operations.

An essential part of that force was members of the Army National Guard. Nearly 38,000 Army Guardmembers deployed to Southwest Asia, while another 24,000 served outside of the Gulf. Over two-thirds of the units were able to deploy within 45 days.

In many cases, units were trained-up earlier, but had to wait for transportation -- especially sealift -- to get their equipment to Southwest Asia. The long-held belief that the Guard could not be ready in time to help the Army win a modern war was convincingly disproved.

In many respects, the Army Guard owed the role it played in Desert Storm to the role it *didn't* play in Vietnam. While more than 7,000 Guardsmen deployed to Vietnam following the Tet Offensive in 1968, the overall Guard contribution to the war was small, because of a political decision made by the Johnson administration to downplay the ongoing war.

By relying on the draft, rather than the Guard and Reserve, only individual families (instead of entire communities) were affected by the war. Following the war, Army leaders determined that the best way to ensure public support in the future -- and also ensure that America would not be involved in another war that dragged on for years -- was to rely on the reserves. Thus, the "Total Force" policy was born.

In 1990, almost 20 years after the Total Force policy was introduced, the Army Guard was 456,000 soldiers strong, and contained 46 percent of the combat, 32 percent of the combat support, and 26 percent of the combat service support forces in the Army.

Many Guardsmen noticed the change from the Guard of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Realistic field training and increased schooling opportunities made for a more professional force, while many of the practices that

Regulars despised so much in "weekend warriors" -- long hair, relaxed discipline, cold beer and campfires in the field during annual training -- had disappeared. By all measurable standards, the Army Guard was more ready for war than it had been in its entire history.

When Iraq invaded Kuwait on Aug. 2, 1990, the necessity of deploying Guard and Reserve units to bolster America's response was never in question. On Aug. 22 President George Bush authorized the call-up of 200,000 Reservists for Operation Desert Shield.

The first Army Guard unit mobilized for Operation Desert Shield was Alabama's 1241st Adjutant General Company (Postal). It won a coin toss that took place at 2 a.m. on Aug. 27, 1990 in the Alabama Guard's Emergency Operations Center. The loser of the coin toss, Alabama's 1207th Quartermaster Detachment (Water Purification), was the second Army Guard unit mobilized. However, the honor of being the first Army Guard unit to arrive in Southwest Asia belonged to Colorado's 1158th Transportation Detachment (Movement Control), who touched down in Saudi Arabia on Sept. 9. By Nov. 1, there were 91 Army Guard units containing 9,102 citizen-soldiers on active duty.

In November, however, the mission of Desert Shield changed. There were enough heavy combat forces in the



GUARD HISTORY

By Capt. Les' Melnyk
Army Guard Historian

and coalition forces would attack once the January deadline passed. On Dec. 1 there were 231 Army Guard units with 36,689 soldiers in federal service. That number would rise to 341 units and 55,664 soldiers by the Jan. 15 deadline.

Among the units called up in late November/early December were five Army Guard combat brigades. Three of these -- Georgia's 48th Infantry Brigade, Mississippi's 155th Armored Brigade, and Louisiana's 256th Infantry Brigade -- were roundout brigades to active duty divisions. While many of the soldiers in these units hoped that they still might be trained and deployed, the Army viewed them as a strategic reserve and did not allocate sealift to move these units to Saudi Arabia.

However, this was not the case for the other two Guard Brigades mobilized -- Tennessee's 196th Field Artillery Brigade and Arkansas's 142nd Field Artillery Brigade. The artillery brigades quickly deployed to the Gulf, where they rained down terrific destruction upon the Iraqis.

It prompted the commander of the British 4th Armoured Brigade to remark about the Arkansas brigade: "By golly, they were good ... Talking to the Iraqi artillery commander after the war, he told me that 90 percent of his crews on that position had been killed or wounded when this initial bombardment had gone in. He lost more than 70 guns in the space of an hour, which was a pretty major achievement."

Most of the missions performed by the Guard in the Gulf were combat support and service support. Twenty eight states, two territories, and the District of Columbia provided Military Police units to control traffic and guard the more than 71,000 Iraqi prisoners of war. Transportation, Quartermaster and Ordnance units made possible the massive shift of forces for Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf's "Hail Mary" on the Iraqi flank. The equivalent, as one book put it, "of moving the entire population of Akron, Ohio, and all of their vehicles and worldly goods westward to Fort Wayne, Indiana, while the neighbors in Cleveland, a few miles north, think they are still at home."

Guard Engineers breached the Iraqi defenses and built supply roads for the advancing mechanized forces. Guard medical units evacuated and treated the injured -- friend and foe alike.

Fortunately, not a single Army Guardmember became a combat casualty, though 34 died during the course of the mobilization, mostly as a result of traffic accidents.

The homecoming was a spectacular affair. Streets lined with flag-waving well-wishers and yellow ribbons greeted Guardsmen across America. It was particularly emotional for those who also served in Vietnam. They sensed, as did President Bush, that "the specter of Vietnam has been buried forever in the desert sands of the Arabian Peninsula."

With an astonishing 97 percent of Army Guard units meeting the Army's mobilization criteria on the day they were called up, Desert Storm validated once and for all the Total Force policy.



Photo courtesy of NGB Historical Services

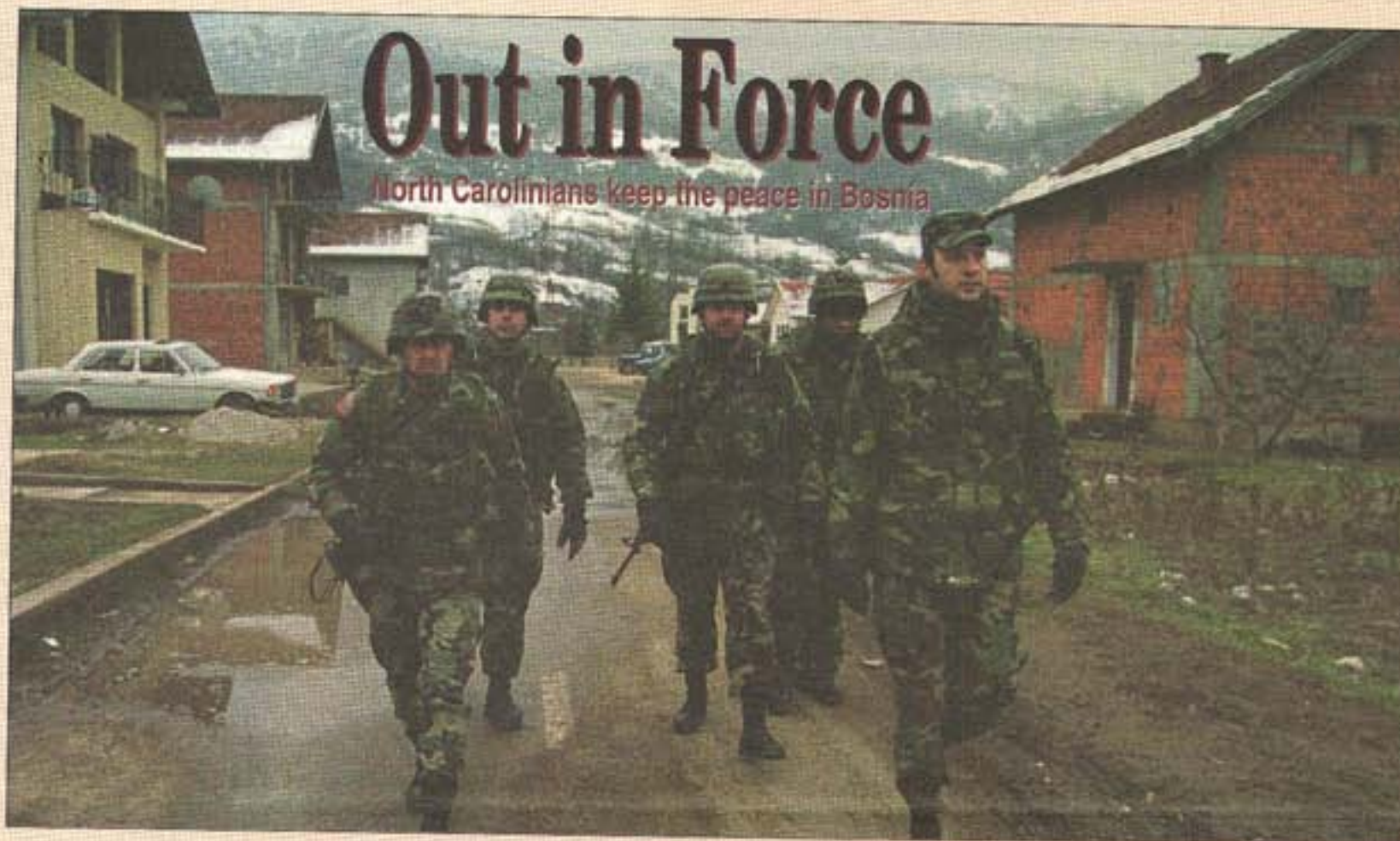
ABLE FORCE -- West Virginia Army Guard Sgt. Henry Crawford, a member of the 146th Medical Company, treats a wounded Iraqi soldier, Feb. 25, 1991.

Gulf, both U.S. and coalition, to protect Saudi Arabia from Iraqi attack. Saddam would not budge from Kuwait, insisting it was Iraq's "19th Province." Stories of atrocities inflicted by upon Kuwaiti civilians angered the rest of the world, and UN pressure mounted on Iraq in the form of trade embargoes and demands that it withdraw from Kuwait.

On Nov. 8, President Bush announced that he was doubling U.S. forces in the Gulf. On Nov. 29, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 678, demanding Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait by Jan. 15, 1991. The pace of call-ups increased as it became clear that U.S.



TRAINING



Out in Force

North Carolinians keep the peace in Bosnia



QUENCHING RELATIONS — North Carolina Spc. Anthony Ozmore (above) shares some water with a woman in Brayunac. Sgt. Raymond Fowler (right) sits in his Humvee in front of a bombed out building.



Photos by SSgt.
Bob Jordan



PRESENCE PATROLS — North Carolina Army Guard SFC Tracy Fox (top photo, left), Cpl. David Schmitt (also in mask above), Sgt. Randy Knoll, Spc. Garrett Paige walk the streets of Sekovici with an interpreter. Brig. Gen. Danny Hickman (center) talks with 1st Battalion, 252nd Armor soldiers near Gradacac, Bosnia.