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THE ON GUARD

Volume XXIV, No. 3

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January 2000

District Guard ushers in turn of century

■ **First Night: More than 1,000 D.C. soldiers, airmen help keep Capitol quiet**

By MSgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

The National Archives may have blocked his view of the fireworks that engulfed the Washington Monument, but the stately structure will never dim David Young's memory of where he was and what he was doing when 2000 surged into the continental United States on New Year's Eve.

The staff sergeant in the District of Columbia Army National Guard was on "First Night" military police duty at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and 7th Street in the nation's capitol at that long-anticipated and magical moment in time.

He did not hear President William Clinton's address at the Lincoln Memorial and the "10! 9! 8! 7! ..." countdown. He could barely hear the rendition of "Auld Lang Syne" sung by the 300,000

partying people who loudly, peacefully rang in 2000 on the National Mall. He didn't even get a midnight kiss.

But David Young and more than 1,000 other D.C. National Guard soldiers and airmen knew they were part of the historical event that happens once in a thousand years -- even if their own parties had to wait until their weekend duty ended at midday Jan. 2.

"I don't mind being out here. We've

taken the mission, and we're going to do it," said Young, a State Department diplomatic security officer and former Marine who now soldiers part-time with the 274th Military Police Company. He worked that busy downtown intersection with D.C. Metropolitan Police officers Vene Lagon and David Santiago.

It was, by and large, an uneventful night and weekend for the D.C. Guard's military and security police people who presented a peaceful, professional image in their dress uniforms and orange reflective vests after Metropolitan Police Inspector Lillian Overton swore them in as special police officers.

The computers that run the street and traffic lights, the water and sewer systems, and telephones and that illuminate the Capitol dome as a world-wide symbol of freedom rolled over from 1999 to 2000 as smoothly as if it were any other night in Washington.

Still, Young and 150 other military police people were on the streets and 10 administrative specialists were in district headquarters ready to help the police control traffic and crowds and process paperwork had the Y2K bug plunged the city into darkness.

The Guardmembers were unarmed except for black batons they carried for their own protection.

In all, 300 District Army and Air Guard police people spent their January drill weekend working 12-hour shifts or standing by to support the metropolitan police as hundreds of thousands of people celebrated the arrival of 2000 in Washington.



Photo by MSgt. Bob Haskell

FIRST NIGHT WATCH -- D.C. Army Guard Sgt. David Young and D.C. police officer Vene Lagon worked our nation's capitol when 2000 arrived.

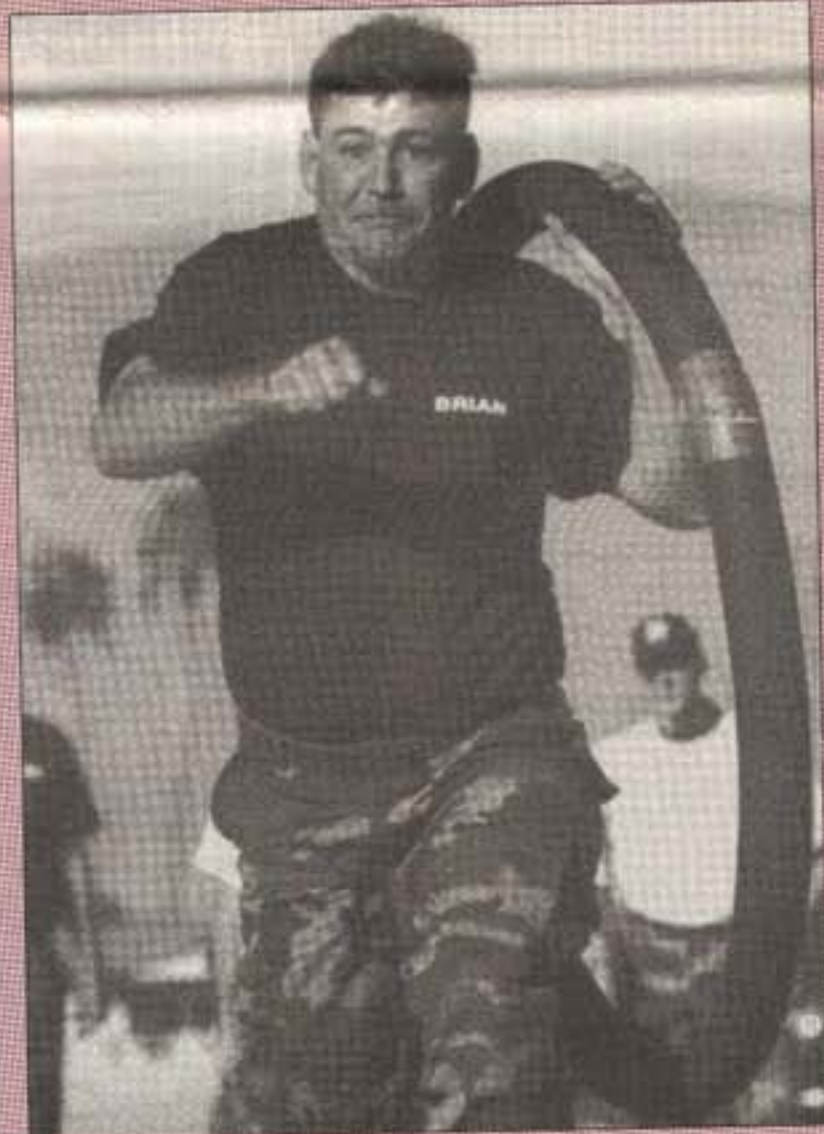


Photo by SSgt. Dave Neve

HOSE HAUL

Arizona Air Guard TSgt. Brian Reed, a member of the 162nd Fighter Wing based in Tucson, races a hose to the finish line during the refueling portion of a 'Fuels Roadeo' competition.

■ See NEW YEAR, page 5



COMMENTARY

• R i g h t i n g a R e f u e l i n g F o i b l e

ABOUT the PAPER

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GUARD MAIL

Head in the Clouds

I just received another great issue of your newspaper. We have several members of our unit that can't wait for the new issues to come out to see what else is going on around the country with the Army and Air Guard.

However, on the front page of the December issue is a picture of a KC-135 refueling a jet over Iraq. The caption line suggests the jet being refueled is an F-16. I think that it's an F-15 instead. The back page shows an F-16 being refueled.

I just finished a course on aircraft recognition, so you can imagine why I picked up on it. Keep up the good work and remember the saying of the Guard: 'You Can.'

SSgt. Bill Boswell
Arkansas National Guard

I hate to nitpick, but please have someone requisition an aircraft identification book for your proofreader. The "F-16" as pictured in the *Gas to Go* photo obviously has too many tails to be a Falcon.

By the way, I'm a member of the 102nd Fighter Wing at Otis Air National Guard Base -- an (F-15) Eagle farm.

MSgt. George T. Shoner
Massachusetts National Guard

We, that is the members of the North Dakota Air Guard's 119th



Photo by Lt. Col. Mike Waters

An F-15, never to be confused with an F-16, is refueled by a Pennsylvania Air Guard KC-135.

Fighter Wing in Fargo, received and distributed the December issue. It looks great, as it normally does.

One photo caught my attention for a different reason -- the refueled aircraft on the front page that is described as an F-16 aircraft. It appears, and geez I do wear glasses; but sir, the damn thing looks like an F-15. Not only that, but it looks like an F-15 with two seats.

I'm gonna guess there was a slip of the fingers, between the "5" and "6" on your keyboard.

TSgt. Dave Somdahl
North Dakota National Guard

I thoroughly enjoy reading your newspaper. I would like to point out, however, the picture on the front page of the December issue. It shows a refueling boom giving fuel to an F-15E "Strike Eagle," not an F-16.

Aircraft recognition is something we train on quite heavily as Army National Guard helicopter pilots. How'd I do?

Lt. Col. Russell E. Perry
Iowa National Guard

I am writing regarding the mistake on the December front page. You have a picture of an aircraft being refueled, but you identify it as an F-16. As a Tactical Airlift Command fighter since December 1963, I would say this aircraft is an F-15 Eagle. The aircraft on page 16 is an F-16 being refueled.

I hope the crew chief of that F-15 is not insolent by your paper for calling his aircraft an F-16. All of the crew chiefs that I have known over the years take great pride in the aircraft they are in charge of.

Mr. Jerry Frederick
Arkansas National Guard

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GUARD TOONS

By Lyle Farquhar

Comments or ideas: farquhar@mostj.ang.af.mil



"Looks like your banking experience really helped increase the turn out for Anthrax shots."



IN THE NEWS

• Actively Involved • Flood Rescuers • Summer Jobs

Audino takes over active Army battalion

History Made: Former Vermont Guardsman takes reins of 1-33rd Armor at Fort Lewis, Wash.

By MSgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

Lt. Col. Ernest Audino, wearing tanker boots and the chrome cavalry spurs he earned in Germany 15 years ago, became the first National Guard officer to ever take command of an active Army battalion on Jan. 12, in western Washington state.

Audino, 39, assumed the full-time command and the bright yellow flag of the 1st Battalion, 33rd Armor at Fort Lewis from Lt. Col. Henry St-Pierre during an indoor ceremony on a rare snowy morning at Fort Lewis. He then began a remarkable march into the Army's future with his old outfit.

A highly-regarded armor officer from the Vermont Army National Guard, Audino, 39, will help develop new Army doctrine during the two years he leads that armored unit, nicknamed "Men of War." He first served in the unit after graduating from West Point in 1983.

That battalion belongs to the 2nd Infantry Division's 3rd Brigade, one of the first two brigades that will convert from tank units to interim "brigade combat

teams." They will feature faster wheeled vehicles as the first step in Army Chief of Staff Gen. Eric Shinseki's plan to forge a more mobile Army.

The Army has not obtained the new vehicles because the transformation is still on the drawing board. But the objective, said Audino, will be the ability to deploy and fight anywhere in the world within four days.

"This is on the cutting edge. I feel proud and privileged to be here," said Audino. He is a former civilian environmental lawyer who has embraced this unexpected opportunity to help the Army revise decades of doctrine and gain control of future battlefields.

"It is a challenging and exciting opportunity for me and these soldiers to be with this unit during this historical event for the Army," said Audino two days before taking command of the battalion's 550 men and 58 M1-A1 Abrams tanks.



Lt. Col. Ernest Audino

The 1st Brigade of the 25th Infantry Division, also based at Fort Lewis, will also take part in the transformation. Three other brigades, still unidentified, are expected to be included in the new, lighter force. Army Guard officials have indicated they would not be surprised if one of their brigades is included in the change.

Maj. Gen. Roger Schultz, director of the Army Guard, and Maj. Gen. Martha Rainville, Vermont's adjutant general, plus many other Army Guard friends attended the change of command ceremony to honor the personable Audino and pay tribute to the Army's ongoing efforts to integrate the active and reserve components.

emony to honor the personable Audino and pay tribute to the Army's ongoing efforts to integrate the active and reserve components.

■ See ACTIVE ARMY COMMAND, page 13

Carolina MPs rescue elderly couple from flood

By SFC Danny Brazell
South Carolina National Guard

There was little time to waste and the soldiers with the South Carolina Army Guard's 133rd Military Police Company, who were called upon to help a stranded elderly couple, knew it.

With rising flood waters lapping at the roof of the couple's pickup truck, and them clinging desperately to its passenger door, four MPs — 133rd commander Capt. John Baird, Sgt. Robert Adams Jr., Spc. James Brunson and PFC Franklin Neal — plunged into the rapidly-flowing water brought on by heavy rains from Hurricane Floyd.

The woman, reluctant to leave her husband, had to be coaxed into placing a rescue rope around her. Once



Photo by MSgt. Phillip H. Jones

assured of her husband's safety, Neal and Brunson swam beside her as Sgt. Carl Pickrel pulled the safety rope from the other end. Baird and Adams stayed with the husband until the two men returned with the rope, completing the rescue.

Fellow Palmetto State MPs, Sgts. Michael Montreose and John Smith,

HEROES — Pickrel (front, left), Smith, Montreose, Brunson (standing, left), Neal and Baird received Medals of Valor.

helped the others recover the truck.

Each soldier received the National Guard's Medal of Valor from Maj. Gen. Stan Spears, adjutant general, in a ceremony held Dec. 5 at their armory in Florence.

Ironically, the group had pulled an unoccupied vehicle from swelling flood waters prior to their rescue of the stranded couple, Pickrel said.

"It was like a rehearsal," he recalled, "so we were ready to spring into action when we got there.

"It was a good feeling," Pickrel added. "This was one of those times when I know I made a difference in someone's life."

NATIONAL BRIEFS

Murray 'warrants' attention

Former Ohio Army Guard soldier Aurelia "Viki" Murray became the first African-American woman to be promoted to CWO5 in the entire Army.

Murray is currently assigned to the National Guard Bureau, where she serves as the program manager for the Warrant Officer Program at the Army Guard Readiness Center in Arlington, Va.

NTC seeking observers, controllers for summer duty

The National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., is seeking qualified members of the Army National Guard to serve as observers, controllers this July when the South Carolina Army Guard's 218th Infantry Brigade is put to the test.

The 45-day commitment will include 23 days of training at the NTC's Observer/Controller Academy. Soldiers will be expected to bring the necessary equipment and clothing required to work and live in the Mojave Desert. They also must have a Humvee license (DD Form 348 and SF 46).

Soldiers must fall within the listed rank structure to qualify.

MOS	RANK
12B	Sgt.-SFC
13F	Sgt.-SFC
14S	Sgt.-SSG
15B	1st Lt.-Maj.
31W	Sgt.-SFC
54B	Sgt.-SFC
55B	Sgt.-SFC
55D	Sgt.-SFC
62N	Sgt.-SFC
63H	Sgt.-SFC
63B	Sgt.-SFC
77F	Sgt.-SFC
88M	Sgt.-SFC
91B45	Sgt.-SFC
91B	Sgt.-SFC
92P	Sgt.-SFC
95B	Sgt.-MSgt.
153D	CWO2/3
153DG	CWO2
351	WO1GWO2

If you satisfy the above requirements, contact Capt. Jack Coleman at (703) 607-9328 or DSN 327-9328. His e-mail is: colemanj@ngb-arng.ngb.army.mil

You may also contact Capt. Ken Freeman at (760) 380-6225 or DSN 470-6225. His e-mail is: Freemanwk@irwin.army.mil

IN THE NEWS

Wisconsin unit honors fallen airmen

By MSgt. Wayne Rodriguez
Wisconsin National Guard

On a cold, overcast day on Dec. 10, 1993, six airmen with the Wisconsin Air Guard's 128th Refueling Wing were killed after an aircraft explosion.

Six years to the day later, their sacrifice was remembered by family and friends.

A memorial service was held for MSgt. James Schlicht, MSgt. Roy Starszak, TSgt. Michael Heath, TSgt. James Russell, TSgt. Russell Shur and SSgt. Patrick Foran, "to again remind ourselves of the six lives lost in the pursuit of freedom," noted Father William Hower.

Hower, a retired 128th chaplain, added "we take note of the fact that they were doing their ordinary duty when taken from us, which reinforces in our hearts and minds, that no task, in the profession of arms, is ever routine, because every task is concerned with freedom, and honor and integrity.

Pastor (Lt. Col.) Carl Krueger, the current 128th chaplain, spoke about the importance of remembering dates such as Dec. 7, 1941, Nov. 22, 1963, and of course, Dec. 10, 1993.

"We must always honor those who served and gave their lives and remember their families," he said.

Dec. 10 also was the day for the dedication of the unit's recently erected Minuteman statue -- a symbol that recognizes the first Guardsmen who fought and died alongside Gen. George Washington during the Revolutionary War.

The statue had been the dream of many past and current wing members, who helped raise \$7,000 for the monument that now stands as a permanent reminder of the sacrifice paid one tragic December day by modern day Minutemen.

Air Guard policy promotes deserving NCOs

By MSgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

Promotions from staff sergeant to technical sergeant, from pay grade E-5 to E-6, are rarely attended by the Air Guard's director and command chief master sergeant.

So it was a special occasion indeed that brought Maj. Gen. Paul Weaver Jr., the Air Guard director, and Command CMSgt. Gary Broadbent to Maryland's 175th Wing at Martin State Airport, outside Baltimore, on Jan. 5.

Staff Sergeants Joseph Casal, James Elliott and Michael Jones were promoted to five-striped tech sergeants during the high-profile ceremony that punctuated the Air Guard's new pay-grade policy for its 96,000 enlisted people.

The three sergeants are the first to benefit from the Enlisted Grades Policy that gives Air Guard members a few thousand more higher ranking and higher paying positions and an equitable rank structure. It also ensures that every airman gets the chance to become at least a staff sergeant.

Weaver approved the policy late last year, during the Air Guard's Year of the Enlisted Force. Many more citizen-airmen will be promoted this year.

"We need to take care of our people. We need to have our own grades policy that reflects our capabilities, that reflects our great people," Weaver explained.

Elliott, a C-130 crewmember, and Jones, an A-10 crew chief, have each been staff sergeants for a dozen years. They wondered if they would ever be promoted because their units already had an abundance of slotted E-6s.

"It seemed like it would be a long wait, from the looks of the manning document," acknowledged Jones, who joined the 175th in 1982 and has been a full-time A-10 technician since 1986.

"This will streamline the upward mo-



Photo by MSgt. Bob Haskell

bility and create more incentives for the younger people. They know they can move up now," offered Elliott, 48, a four-year Navy aviation veteran who became a part-time Air Guard C-130 crewmember in 1984.

"People stay in my unit in the same rank because of the pay and benefits and because they have the best chance to travel all over the world," added Elliott of the outfit that frequently flies cargo to Europe and Southwest Asia.

"It was very hard to get rank under the old system unless someone went away," said Casal. He was a tech sergeant in the New York Air Guard for eight years before moving to Maryland with his new wife in 1998 to become a full-time trainer on the new, high-tech C-130J airplanes that the wing is acquiring.

That's because there was no universal system, said Broadbent.

"The new initiative will correct the functional imbalance that exists within some career fields -- too many airmen in some fields, not enough technical sergeants in others," Weaver noted.

He also vowed that "under no circumstances would we tolerate any further re-

TOP TROOPS -- Newly promoted TSgts. Joseph Casal (left), Michael Jones and James Elliott benefitted from the Air Guard's Enlisted Grades Policy.

duction in grade structure."

The Air Guard's new policy is intended to eliminate a log jam and give qualified enlisted people the chance to make rank, explained Broadbent.

He and James Ware, civilian chief of the Military Requirements Branch in the Air Guard's Manpower office, led the 13-member team that wrote the policy.

The Air Guard now has additional grade authorizations for 400 E-8 slots and an extra 3,800 E-7 and 3,800 E-6 positions, Broadbent added.

Weaver made it crystal clear why he believes all people who wear stripes deserve the chance to earn promotions.

"You are an indispensable element of the Total Force mix thanks to your maturity, experience and smarter way of doing business," the director said. "It's high time our Enlisted Grades Policy kept pace with the standards you have all set for our military."



Photo by SSgt. Jay Ellison

HOLIDAY 'HUMMER'

South Carolina MSgt. Phillip Jones and Pvt. Hogeye greet crowds during a Columbia, S.C., Christmas parade aboard a uniquely-painted Humvee. The 'Palmetto Thunder Hummer' was readied for display by SSgt. Jay Ellison and SFC Charlie Ford.

NEW YEAR

FROM PAGE 1

Other Army and Air Guard people staffed operations centers at the D.C. Armory and at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland. Still others stood by to transport and fire up generators at critical locations had city's utilities gone down.

More Guardmembers remained on standby at the armory to help police deal with civil disturbances. Helicopter crews were on alert at Davison Army Airfield beside nearby Fort Belvoir should their medevac helicopters be needed.

"We were all very thankful that our National Guard people did not have to respond to any emergencies, and many of our leaders said they have never seen morale as high as it was this weekend," said Lt. Col. Phyllis Phipps-Barnes, the D.C. National Guard's public affairs officer.

"Your outstanding performance is not atypical. It's the standard," praised Maj. Gen. Warren Freeman, the district's presidentially-appointed commanding general.

"We received a lot of positive recognition this weekend, and that recognition will lead to more challenges like this in the future," beamed Freeman of the D.C. Guard's part in the National Guard's nation-wide watch.

Operations centers were staffed in all 50 states and the territories of Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands in case governors had to call out the Guard. A twice-tested high-frequency radio network connected everyone with the Army National Guard's Readiness Center in Arlington, Va., should telephones and other communications systems fail to function because computers read 00 as 1900 instead of 2000.

It was a monthly training weekend for all Arkansas Guardmembers, and nearly 7,000 soldiers and airmen were on duty in 20 other states besides the people staffing the operations centers.

"We were prepared to deal with any catastrophic event," said Col. Clyde Vaughn, the Army Guard's chief of operations, in Arlington. "I think the American people have a lot of confidence in the idea that they are secure. I think we're part of that confidence."

The New Year's Eve mission was hardly new for the District of Columbia National Guard.

Citizen-soldiers have taken part in every presidential and mayoral inauguration since George Washington's, and this generation is already planning for the 21st century's first U.S. presidential inauguration next January.

They have also supported civil authorities during such recent events as the NATO Summit and 50th anniversary last April, the blizzard of January 1996 and the 1995 Million Man March.

"This is an on-going thing. We work with Metropolitan Police and the D.C. Emergency Management Agency on a regular basis. That makes it even easier," observed Freeman.

This was far better duty, Freeman reflected, than the civil disturbances for which he was called to duty 22 times as an enlisted Guard soldier and young officer during 1968-72.

"We're doing just what the police are doing, helping people and maintaining order," explained the general about the directive that his military police wear their dress uniforms instead of their combat camouflage. "The only difference with this is that we're bringing in people on New Year's weekend."

The police appreciated the help, and Guardmembers

INSIDE NEW YEAR'S DUTY

Toiling at the Century's Turn

By MSgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

Capt. Charles Mussi helped the Secretary of Defense watch 2000 make its way around the world. Spc. Mark Peterson made many National Guard people laugh.

They were two of America's citizen-soldiers who performed a diverse array of official functions and off-the-wall antics on December's final Friday as the 1990s gave way to 2000 and the promise of a new millennium.

Mussi, 37, is a Virginia Army Guard officer who since last April has worked at the Pentagon on the public affairs staff for Defense Secretary William Cohen.

Mussi worked the day watch on Dec. 31. While the sun was shining brightly in Washington, he tracked the progress of 2000 and watched for any Y2K-related computer problems as the midnight hour struck U.S. military installations in such far-flung Pacific posts as the Kwajalein Atoll and Guam.

He watched New Year's fireworks burst over Auckland, New Zealand, and Sydney, Australia, and Moscow.

By 4 p.m., it was already a significant news day. Russian President Boris Yeltsin had resigned. The United States had officially turned control of the Panama Canal over to Panama. Former U.S. Attorney General Elliot Richardson had died.

But Y2K had bombed as a bug. Ten time zones and 38 countries had rolled over without any problems for U.S. forces.

Still, the National Guard soldier who had helped protect a Sava River bridge in Bosnia two winters ago found a sense of satisfaction from working that Pentagon watch.

"I believe I'm part of the global community," Mussi explained. "If you're in uniform for the right reason, you serve for times like this."

liked being part of the mission.

"I think it's good for these guys to be out here with us," said Metropolitan Police Detective Jose Rodriguez, who was observing the traffic and pedestrians.

"We'll be directing traffic here at midnight," Rodriguez predicted. "They'll help me if we have a mess." At 1 o'clock New Year's morning, however, traffic was flowing smoothly through that brightly-lit intersection.

Still, just being there was an adventure for District Guardmembers.

"This makes you test your dedication," said D.C.

Mark Peterson did his shtick at the local level, with some well-timed comic relief at the District of Columbia's National Guard Armory that Friday evening.

The imposing 6-foot-2 1/2, 240-pound Army Guard truck driver entertained a couple of hundred Guard soldiers who were ready to support the police and other agencies in the district. He had them rolling in the aisles with a boisterous routine that could land him a spot on any improvisational stage.

"I don't feel like I'm a funny man, but I can be funny," explained Peterson who is a traditional Guardsman in the 547th Transportation Company and who works full-time as a service representative for United Airlines.

The jump wings on his camouflage shirt proves the 35-year-old man from the south side of Pittsburgh takes his soldiering seriously. He was an artilleryman in the 82nd Airborne Division during the four years he spent in the active Army in the 1980s, he said.

But his own style of humor is the release he offers to others.

"Doing the opposite of what you're supposed to



Photos by MSgt. Bob Haskell

ON THE JOB — Spc. Mark Peterson (left) entertained, while Capt. Charles Mussi (above) accompanied the Secretary of Defense.

do," is how Peterson said he leaves 'em laughing. "This has always been my nature. I don't imitate anybody. I like people, but I really don't want to be like anybody."

"If they want to see me cut up, I cut up," he added. "They're going to be here all night. They need this to make the mission work."

"He has the knack for keeping things positive and keeping morale high," said the D.C. Army Guard Recruiting and Retention SGM Ralph Cooper who has known Peterson for three years in the Guard. "He used to support the recruiting office," Cooper added. "His presence made a difference."

Knowing what to say, and do, made it a special New Year's Eve indeed for the Guard captain who watched the world throughout the day and for the specialist who helped his comrades make it through the night.

Army Guard Cpl. Edward Walker with the 276th Military Police Company. "It makes you feel like you're a part of history -- the turn of the century."

Walker acknowledged he would have been at home with his family in Fort Washington, Md., watching TV as the ball dropped at New York's Times Square. But his night would not have been complete.

"I'd be wondering what was going on out here," Walker explained. "This makes me want to go into action. I don't want anything to go wrong, but I want to have an impact on whatever takes place."



BYRD in HAND -- Senator Robert Byrd (above, left) accepts the coveted Montgomery Award from National Guard Bureau Chief Lt. Gen. Russell Davis. A host of military and civilian luminaries (right) happily vie for an opportunity to cut the National Guard's birthday cake.

West Virginia Senator Byrd honored as Guard celebrates 363 years of service



Photos by MSgt. John Thornton

Birthday BASH

By MSgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

U.S. Sen. Robert C. Byrd paid an eloquent tribute to this country's first president and foremost citizen-soldier while accepting the National Guard Bureau's highest honor during the Guard's 363rd birthday celebration in Washington, D.C., on Dec. 14.

"President Washington was perhaps the nation's premier example of the citizen-soldier, having led the nation's armed forces through the Revolutionary War and, subsequently, serving as our first president," said the venerable senator from West Virginia who was named this year's recipient of the Montgomery Award bestowed by the Chief of the National Guard Bureau.

"He is the greatest president that this country has ever had and, in my judgment, the greatest president this country will ever have. Perhaps more than any other man he is responsible for this great ship of state," said Byrd who honored the Revolutionary War hero on Dec. 14, the

200th anniversary of Washington's death.

"This great man knew well how to motivate that ragged, weary, ill-equipped revolutionary army as it fought against the most formidable military force of the day," said Byrd of the militia soldier from Virginia who led the Continental Army to victory over British forces.

Byrd, the ranking Democrat on the Senate's powerful Appropriations Committee and former Democratic Leader for 12 years, made those comments at the Russell Senate Office Building where 150 people celebrated the National Guard as this nation's oldest military force. It was first formed in Massachusetts in December 1636.

Lt. Gen. Russell Davis, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, presented the award named for retired Mississippi Congressman G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery to Byrd, a U.S. senator for 41 years and a member of Congress since 1953.

The celebration featured a Department of Defense display commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Korean War. More than 183,000 Army and Air Guard troops served on active duty during that war that broke out on June 25, 1950.

"We are trying to let the American public know that the people who fought in Korea did not serve in vain," said Virginia Army Guard Maj. Peter Kyong-Hyon Kemp, a Korean-American member of the commemoration committee, who wore "pinks and greens," the Army's dress uniform during that era.

Davis presented Byrd the Montgomery Award on behalf of the 461,000 National Guardmembers "for your outstanding service to this country; for your outstanding service to the National Guard; for the entire United States armed forces of which you are very proud and which you serve very admirably; ... and for keeping in mind in all of your dealings the security and the welfare of all of the

people of the United States."

Byrd was a welder on Liberty and Victory ships in Baltimore during World War II. Maj. Gen. Allen Tackett, the West Virginia adjutant general, praised him as "a true American legend of success and achievement."

He became the first person to earn a law degree while serving in Congress, Tackett explained. Byrd graduated with honors from American University in 1963 following 10 years of night school.

"Sen. Byrd has always stood for the men and women who serve this nation, and he has always provided the money necessary so they'd have the best equipment and the most modern facilities they need to defend this great nation," Tackett added.

"I have always been proud of the men and women who serve in the National Guard and especially in the West Virginia National Guard," said Byrd during his acceptance remarks. "These soldiers and airmen are ready to serve whenever they are needed, whether in response to floods or blizzards in the state, or in support of our armed services around the globe."

Observing that the world has changed somewhat during the decade since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the demise of the Soviet Union, Byrd observed that "the world is still a very dangerous place."

The senior senator from West Virginia punctuated his pledge to continue supporting the National Guard's role in the Total Force strategy of the United States by referring to a point that President Washington made during his first annual address to Congress.

"All of you here today are engaged in the effort of preserving peace through a strong military establishment," said Byrd after recalling Washington's observation that "To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace."

Gilmore gives nod to Guard 'responders'

By MSgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

Virginia Gov. Jim Gilmore is fully aware of his state's military heritage and of its numerous targets of opportunity for terrorists.

It is no surprise, therefore, that he is advocating a key role for the National Guard's 10 new military support detachments as chairman of a new congressional advisory panel charged with determining the United States' ability to cope with weapons of mass destruction.

"We would fully expect the National Guard to be an early responder that would either help the civilian population or, if necessary, take the steps necessary to contain the situation," said Virginia's first-term chief executive.

"Other military vehicles are available, but I personally feel, as the governor of a great military state, that the Guard has a key role in this area," said Gilmore who is commander-in-chief for the Old Dominion's 9,100 National Guard troops.

The 20-member advisory panel chaired by Gilmore includes former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and has two and a half years to recommend to Congress how local officials should join forces in the event of a terrorist attack.

Historically, Virginia has produced such military leaders as George Washington and Robert E. Lee and has been ravaged by war more than any other state in this country.

Practically, Virginia is considered a prime target for a terrorist attack because of its proximity to Washington, D.C., and because of its 20 military installations.

Personally, Gilmore has earned his own military spurs. He was a decorated Army counter-intelligence agent for NATO in West Germany in the early 1970s. He has persuaded the Virginia Legislature to give active duty military people living in Virginia a tax break on the first \$30,000 of their annual income.

Virginia did not get one of the first 10 military support detachments, but Gilmore hopes his state will get one of the new units being considered by Congress.

"We live in a free country, and we must not allow the threat of terrorism to change that," he said. "But in a free country, where we don't keep tabs on people, there's an advantage for people who would strike."

"We have to eliminate that advantage through excellence in law enforcement and through excellence and cooperation with our military and Guard," Gilmore added.

"We believe the National Guard can play a leadership role in that effort."

IN MEMORY

Passing of former Bureau Chiefs, Weber and Greenleaf, prompt stirring tributes

Molders of the Modern Guard

By MSgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

A young Army private's tribute to his grandfather Jan. 7 in the shadow of the nation's Capitol summed up the way that two of the National Guard's venerable old soldiers and visionary leaders were eulogized during January's first week in Washington, D.C., and Oklahoma City.

"He told me to excel in whatever I do. I earned my air assault badge for him," said 101st Airborne Division PFC Joseph Rogers, 20, following an hour-long memorial service for Lt. Gen. LaVern Weber beneath a rainbow of the 50 state flags at the National Guard Memorial Building close to the Capitol.

Their convictions that the National Guard could excel at any military mission and deserved to be part of the Total Force made Weber and Maj. Gen. Francis Greenleaf, both former chiefs of the National Guard Bureau, citizen-soldier icons within the nation's defense establishment.

Greenleaf, 78, succumbed to cancer at Virginia's Fairfax Hospital on Dec. 19. He was buried at Arlington National Cemetery on Jan. 5, following a funeral service at Fort Myer's Old Chapel where he and his widow Phyllis had been married.

Weber, 76, died Dec. 30 when fencing material fell on him while working on his farm in Perry, Okla. He was laid to rest in Oklahoma City's Union Soldiers Cemetery on Jan. 5. His memorial service in Washington was held two days later.

Hundreds of mourners, including Army Chief of Staff Gen. Eric Shinseki and Vice Chief of Staff Gen. John Keane, and former Army chiefs of staff and chiefs of the Guard Bureau, turned out for the services.

President William Clinton and Secretary of Defense William Cohen sent letters of condolence to the widows and families.

Lt. Gen. Russell Davis, Chief of the Guard Bureau, had thoughtful praise for both of his predecessors who came from the nation's heartland — Nebraska and Oklahoma, who saw combat in Europe during World War II and in Korea, and who are distinctly immortalized at the building that is home to the National Guard Association of the United States. Both men ranked high in that organization after their tenures as chiefs.

"He was an experienced and savvy leader who modernized the Army Guard and led it toward racial integration," said Davis of Greenleaf who was the Guard Bureau's chief from 1971-74 and who served as the association's executive vice president until 1984.

"He was as much at home in a foxhole with soldiers as he was in policy-making meetings with the Secretary of

Defense," said Davis of Weber who served as chief from the 1974-82 and who became the first chief to be given three-star rank. Guard Bureau chiefs have been lieutenant generals ever since.

Weber was deputy-commanding general for mobilization at the Army's Forces Command at Fort McPherson, Ga., during the following year, and he began nine years as the National Guard Association's executive director in 1984, after 42 years in uniform.

He remained an active and respected advocate on Capitol Hill for the nation's nearly half-million Army and Air Guardmembers until his death.

A meeting room named for Greenleaf in the memorial building is filled with his life's mementos — the number 18 he wore as a guard on the 1940 University of Nebraska football team, his photo as an Army Guard aviator, and the original citation for the Silver Star he won as a first lieutenant near St. Lo, France, in July 1944.

Visitors are told that Greenleaf's Nebraska Guard unit, the 134th Infantry Regiment, was mobilized in December 1940 and that he did not get to play Stanford in the 1941 Rose Bowl. Stanford won, 21-13.

Weber's memorial is encased in the building's foundation. An air-tight jar containing a set of three stars, a 1923 silver dollar from the year of his birth, and a patch from the Oklahoma Army Guard's 45th Infantry Division is directly beneath the place where his photo was displayed during his memorial service.

Weber served with the 45th in Korea after joining the Marine Corps Reserve in November 1942. He earned his Marine commission three years later.

Retired Army Guard Col. Bob O'Connell was one of the few people who knew that jar was below the photo.

"He wanted to leave something of himself behind. But he didn't tell anyone about it," explained O'Connell who helped supervise the building's construction a decade ago.

The National Guard's Professional Education Center in Little Rock, Ark., bears Weber's name and legacy as a man who championed the

Montgomery GI Bill and quality of life causes for Guard people and their families.

Other tributes were equally eloquent for the two men who pressed for an integrated, modernized National Guard force during their 11 combined years as Guard Bureau chiefs.

"Gen. Greenleaf had the strongest personality I ever knew," recalled retired Col. Donald Perkins. "He was strictly business. He knew what he was doing at all times, and he bore in on what he had to know."

"With the help of [former Defense Secretary] Mel Laird, my friend LaVern Weber made the National Guard part of the Total Force," praised retired Mississippi Congressman G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery.

Two other tributes tugged at heartstrings. Retired Guard Bureau Chief Lt. Gen. John Conaway said "I've lost a friend, and I'm deeply hurt," before saluting the life-like picture of Weber.

And young PFC Joseph Rogers, in his dress green uniform with bloused trousers, briefly knelt in prayer before that photo before reflecting on how he would remember his grandfather.

"We were fishing buddies every year when I visited him at his farm," said Rogers who was born in Baltimore. "I will always consider Oklahoma my home, because that's where I was with him."



Weber



Greenleaf

HOLIDAY ABROAD

AWAY for the HOLIDAY

By MSgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

As the cold Kosovo countryside lay under a blanket of snow on Dec. 23, engaging Colleen Roberts talked about her son Austin, who is 8 and who she would miss for the second Christmas in four years because of military duty.

The new captain and novice public affairs officer in Washington state's Army National Guard also talked of the retirement home she and her husband have built in Du Pont, Wash., at the southern tip of Puget Sound, even though she does not seem to be the retiring kind.

She is 36, and her sense of service and adventure has taken her to some fascinating places -- Bangladesh, Kwajalein Atoll, and the Republic of Palau, among them. She spent Christmas of 1996 as a cultural affairs and education officer at an Iraqi-Kurd refugee camp on Guam.

Those who know her, therefore, were not surprised that this holiday season found Capt. Colleen Roberts in the war-ravaged province in Yugoslavia. She was settling in to her new job as press officer with Washington's 15-member 122nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment that joined the Task Force Falcon peacekeeping force at Camp Bondsteel in mid-December.

"I joined the National Guard to come to Kosovo. This is what I do, giving service to my country. It's what I know," said the woman who does her best to balance her dedication as a soldier with her devotion as a mother.

"It's my greatest sacrifice. But my son is fine. I've been doing this since he was a year old. My mother lives with us. She's my little boy's second mother," explained Roberts who did not have much time to pine for her people back home.

Talk about a baptism of fire.

Roberts hit the ground in Kosovo with the other Army Guard public affairs people from Washington state one week before a USO show led by Defense Secretary William Cohen brought some holiday cheer to many of the 6,000 American soldiers preserving the peace in that land

during this Balkan winter.

"This was our first mission," explained Roberts after coordinating coverage for the USO show -- that included country singer Mary Chapin Carpenter, comedian Al Franken, football Hall of Famer Terry Bradshaw and Mike Singletary, and super model Christie Brinkley -- with journalists from Yugoslavia and a media entourage from the United States.

She is used to that kind of challenge because military matters have consumed much of her adult life.

There was a four-year hitch in the Air Force, beginning when she was 18 and fresh out of high school. She spent a dozen years as an Army Reserve civil affairs officer before she joined the Army Guard last Oct. 28. She has been married to Capt. Curtis Roberts, an active Army infantry officer at Fort Lewis, Wash., for 10 years.

She holds a political science degree from the University of Arkansas. She is a certified emergency planner. She has helped design disaster plans and training exercises at Kwajalein Atoll, Bangladesh and Palau.

She also has dealt with drought caused by El Nino in the Marshall Islands. She has witnessed the effects of virtually every natural disaster except earthquakes and fires.

Although Roberts had never worked in public affairs before joining the Army National Guard, she was well suited for the assignment in Kosovo, maintained Maj. Mary Forbes, Washington's deputy recruiting and retention manager.

"She has such a unique background, along with a strong and warm personality," said Forbes who is a neighbor to the Roberts in Du Pont. "She's so smart and so positive that she doesn't intimidate people, but she knows how to get them to do what needs to be done."

Not everyone, Forbes observed, would sign up knowing they would be away from their family and home during Christmas and during a celebration like the new millennium.

That, however, is precisely what Colleen Roberts did. She soon discovered a new National Guard family.

She celebrated Christmas with her son and husband on Dec. 3, the night before she left Washington. In Kosovo, she anticipated celebrating Christmas and the New Year with National Guard soldiers who are no longer strangers.

"We're like our own family," Roberts explained. "We're a family away from home for now."



Photo by MSgt. Bob Haskell

STAR STUDDED -- Comedian Al Franken (left) and Washington Army Guard Capt. Colleen Roberts share a smile in Bosnia.



MAINE MEN -- Maine Army Guard SSgt. Ed Markey (left) poses with fellow Bangor-native, Secretary of Defense William Cohen.

Defense Secretary Cohen pledges not to cut 25,000 reservists as forecasted

BEARING GIFTS

By MSgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

The Secretary of Defense proved to be a charismatic Santa Claus during Christmas week for thousands of U.S. troops serving in Europe and for thousands of more Army National Guard and Reserve troops in the United States ready to answer their country's call to arms.

William Cohen led a star-studded, Bob Hope-style USO holiday tour to Italy and to wintry Bosnia, Macedonia and Kosovo where Army troops are engaged in peacekeeping duties.

He also gave members of the Army's reserve components a holiday gift with the announcement that he will not cut 25,000 people as scheduled because, Cohen maintained, they are needed to sustain this nation's military operations.

"What this reflects is the success of the total force," the country's 20th defense secretary told reporters at the Aviano Air Base in Italy the day after announcing on Monday, Dec. 20, that he would postpone the cutbacks called for in the congression-



ally-directed 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review.

"The Reserves and the Guard are playing an equal role in many cases, and they are bearing a full share of the responsibility," said Cohen. "I came to the judgment that if we are going to continue to carry out our current missions, we can't afford to go down any further."

"That is absolutely good news, because we felt we had already been



FOR the TROOPS – Former Chicago Bear linebacker Mike Singletary (left) joined supermodel Christie Brinkley and ex-Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Terry Bradshaw on stage in Bosnia. Dallas Cowboy cheerleaders (below) entertain U.S. peacekeepers before Christmas in Bosnia.



will stay at about 200,000. "Leaving us at that level will let us continue to do the things we have been doing to support the active services," added Younger, who traveled to Europe with the Cohen delegation.

Younger observed that the Army National Guard and Army Reserve would have taken the hit just as they are assuming a greater share of the peacekeeping duties in the Balkans.

Beginning in March, for example, three National Guard divisions will command the American sector's multinational-national force in Bosnia during seven-month rotations over the next four years. Guard combat brigades from North Carolina, Oklahoma and Georgia will supply ground troops for peacekeeping duties there beginning next October.

"The Guard and Reserve are certainly capable of taking on this peacekeeping mission so that the active Army can focus on training for its combat missions," said Younger. "But if you're going to shift this responsibility to us, don't cut us any more. We have to reach a balance of supporting the Army without pulling away from the civilian employers too often."

Cohen supported that assessment with his late December announcement. "We didn't anticipate having both Bosnia and Kosovo and some of the additional peacekeeping missions,"

Cohen explained. "The reserves will continue to play an important role." The Defense Department plans to review its missions and future requirements beginning in January 2001.

Cohen led a diverse delegation of entertainers, celebrities and sports stars -- including singers Mary Chapin Carpenter and Ruth Pointer, football Hall of Famer Terry Bradshaw and Mike Singletary, six Dallas Cowboy

in Maine and how well they deal with the issues, such as snow, that would make the folks in Bangor so proud of them," Cohen said. "The impact they're having on all of the other forces who are there is making them a real model."

The unit, that has recently been trimmed to 59 people and six Blackhawk helicopters, had flown 13 medevac missions and more than 800 hours since joining Task Force Eagle, explained Capt. Mark Sullivan.

A recent mission involved a 40-mile flight to save a Russian soldier whose hand was blown off when an anti-personnel mine exploded and killed another Russian soldier, Sullivan said. A Bosnian citizen had turned the mine over to those soldiers.

"We haven't done anything that's easy," said Sullivan as the crowd of peacekeepers cheered for super model Christie Brinkley who appeared on stage. "People's lives have been on the line on every mission we have flown."

In short, the Balkans is still a hazardous place where the Army Guard and Reserve have sustained the peacekeeping force for the past four years.

Defense Secretary William Cohen's holiday message to the home front -- to postpone cutting 25,000 reserve component troops -- means America's citizen-soldiers will be better able to help preserve the peace over there.

"If we are going to continue to carry out our current missions, we can't afford to go down any further"

Cheerleaders and comedian Al Franken -- on a whirlwind tour of five shows in three days.

He met members of an Army Guard medevac unit, the 112th Medical Company, from his native Bangor, Maine, at Eagle Base in Bosnia the Wednesday before Christmas -- after two storms had dumped 50 inches of snow on the countryside. Those citizen-soldiers from Maine underscored his confidence that Guard and Reserve forces are pulling their share of the load.

"The base commander told me about the strong work ethic they have

cut to the bone," said Army Reserve CSM Collin Younger, the senior enlisted advisor to Charles Cragin, the Defense Department's undersecretary for reserve affairs.

The Army Guard has already been reduced by 17,000 troops, and the Army Reserve has lost 3,000 slots based on the QDR recommendations.

Cohen's decision means the Army Guard's strength will remain at about 360,000 troops and the Army Reserve



SPORTS

• Minnesota Marathoner Meets Milestone

Minnesota Army Guard's Robert Rorke ran 50 miles battling rain, mud, slippery leaves and lightning

In for the Long Haul

Imagine running through the woods, up and down hills, for almost 12 hours. Most people wouldn't attempt it. SSgt. Robert Rorke does it regularly.

On a rainy morning last fall, Rorke, a part-time personnel specialist for the Minnesota Army Guard's Troop Command based in Roseville, Minn., tackled the "Superior Trail St." -- a 50-mile foot race through the Sawtooth Mountains near the north shore of Lake Superior. After 11 hours and 26 minutes battling rain, lightning, mud and wet branches, he crossed the finish line.

It wasn't the New York native's first major race, nor his only athletic achievement. In 1981, after his junior year of college at Western Maryland College, he and 11 other bicyclists spent the summer riding across the U.S., from Virginia to Oregon.

"Eleven of us started. Only five finished," he said of that experience.

After graduation, biking gave way to running in Rorke's life. He especially liked longer races. Soon enough, that included marathons. He has run in the Minnesota Twin Cities Marathon every year from 1991 to 1998, Grandma's in Duluth, Minn., twice, the National Guard Marathon three times, the Disney World Marathon once and the Walker (Minn.) Marathon twice. In the same eight-year period, he finished eight 50-kilometer

races and two 50-milers, including the one last year.

Understandably, Rorke's personal life includes a lot of practice runs. On weekends he treats himself to a two or three hour run in nearby Afton State Park, with shorter morning or evening runs during the week.

His wife, Tesch Linsley, has gotten used to the marathons, but admits she still worries that 50 miles might be too long.

For awhile during the Superior 50, he was worried, too. The race started before dawn, on a morning so chilly and dark that runners were forced to wear lighted miner's hats in order to see the trail. Rain and lightning soon added to the gloom. A layer of wet leaves also made footing treacherous. Early in the race, Rorke slipped and fell, skinning his knee. With blood trickling down his leg, he hobbled on for another 11 hours.

"Fifty-milers are really different from marathons. The main competition you feel is with yourself," he said. "Just finishing the race is such an accomplishment. Most runners don't feel as competitive, as they do in shorter races.

"You can't compare your time to someone else's, because you don't know what race that person ran the week before," Rorke continued, "or what they might be running next week. All you really concentrate on is finishing ... and not getting



Photo by SFC Judy Ojard

struck by lightning."

Often, he noted, ultra marathoners most difficult competition is with themselves.

"At one point (during the Superior 50), I thought, 'what am I doing, running through the woods in the pouring rain, with lightning flashing and metal on my

MARATHON MAN -- Minnesota Army Guard SSgt. Robert Rorke enjoys a lunchtime workout at the state capitol in St. Paul.

head," he said. Although the storm subsided, it was still raining when Rorke crossed the finish line.

He had to retire a pair of running shoes after the race.

But running is worth the extra trouble for Rorke, understandably still slim in his 40s.

"It's not just exercise. It ties into every aspect of my life," he observed. "True, it's a good way of staying in shape for the APFTs (Army Physical Fitness Test), but it's more important to know you can set goals and reach them. People need those extra goals in their lives."

His APFT scores are usually "above average," said Rorke, who took a test one day before his 50-mile run last year.

His philosophy for long races, like his philosophy for life, is well-defined.

"Endurance is important, especially in a fifty-miler. You test your mind a lot. You take in the scenery, you watch out for roots on the path, and you think about the finish line.

"When you hit the wall in a marathon, you might think, 'I only have four miles left,'" Rorke added. "But at mile 38 (in the Superior Trail 50), I thought, 'Wow, I only have 12 miles left.'"

Besides his part-time Guard job, Rorke works full-time as a third grade teacher at Putnam Elementary School in northeast Minneapolis. He also dabbles in community theater and works as a volunteer reader to elementary students. Last year he earned a master's degree from Hamline University in St. Paul. He and his wife live in Roseville, Minn., with their two dogs.

Records fall at Wilson championships

By SMSgt. Bernard E. DeLisle
Arkansas National Guard

Setting new records seemed to be the order of the day at the 28th Annual Winston P. Wilson (WPW) Championships, held recently at Camp Joseph T. Robinson, Ark.

The premier shooting event, annually attracts the Guard's best marksmen in rifle, pistol, light machinegun and sniper shooting.

Once again, a team of marksmen from Nebraska were named the "Overall State Champions." Penn-

sylvania and Vermont finished second and third.

Wisconsin's Capt. J.R. Treharne took home the expert rifleman individual title, following by Texas's SSgt. Charles Blackwell and Pennsylvania's 1st Sgt. Gregory Neiderhiser.

Vermont's CWO2 Lawrence Grace Jr. won the individual pistol championship. Virginia's Maj. Michael Michie took second while Connecticut's SSgt. Charles Allen finished third.

Nebraska's SMSgt. Larry Schmid won the Light Machinegun individual championship. Fellow Cornhusker MSgt. Douglas Lierz finished second

and Texas's Capt. Brian L. Hoffman, a C-130 pilot with the 136th Airlift Wing in Dallas, claimed third.

The combat sniper team of SFC Timothy Weber and Sgt. Bruce McCauley from Nebraska posted a new record score (2323 points). Indiana's SSgt. Mark Richard and Sgt. Richard Lester were second. Minnesota snipers SSgt. James Kringlie and Sgt. James Hartig finished third.

The matches are designed to promote marksmanship by providing high-level training and competition among states. Particular emphasis is devoted to improving individual battle-focused "move and shoot" combat marksmanship skills.

The event is named for Air Guard Lt. Gen. Winston "Wimpy" Wilson, former National Guard Bureau chief.

Macedonia POW Christopher Stone joins Michigan Guard, gains new perspective

Capturing Attention

By MSgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

It happened to Charles Lindbergh as well as to Francis Scott Key and Rosa Parks.

It has happened to SSgt. Christopher Stone, who has become a new and articulate spokesperson extolling the benefits of serving in the National Guard, following the 32 days last spring that he and two other U.S. Army soldiers were prisoners of war in Yugoslavia during the NATO air campaign.

Stone, like some famous people before him, is suddenly and unexpectedly an American hero because of a single event that captivated this country.

Now he is using his celebrity status to promote America's citizen-soldiers, the importance of defending freedom, and new Army Chief of Staff Gen. Eric Shinseki's vision of The Army.

Stone began his new duties as a full-time community relations specialist for the Michigan Army National Guard, in his home state, on Oct. 25.

He is also one of America's celebrated soldiers.

He has appeared on "Today" and been interviewed by members of the *Associated Press*. He fielded questions during three radio interviews in one morning while visiting Washington in early November. He also recounted his experiences during a Veterans Day program at the Michigan Historical Society in Lansing.

"Life is going to get back to normal, but I'm always going to have this experience, and I'll always be able to share it with people when I talk to them about serving in the Guard and about military service," observed Stone. "I think it will be easier for people to relate to me because of my unique experience."

"The *Code of Conduct* tells us to never give up faith in your god and your country," said Stone who frequently feared for his life as NATO bombs fell on the cities of Nis and Belgrade where he was held apart from his two comrades. "Those two things are the cornerstone of being able to survive something like that. They worked for me."

"Using that experience, he has a vehicle to talk about freedom and about not taking freedom and America for granted," observed Maj. Jim McCrone, a Michigan National Guard spokesman.



Photo by MSgt. Bob Haskell

WISER WOLVERINE — SSgt. Christopher Stone (above and center) says his capture last year has given him a greater appreciation for those who defend freedom.

"While it was a regrettable situation, he has made a conscious decision to make the best of it and to share that to enrich other people's lives and make America a better place."

At 26, Christopher James Stone of rural Capac, Mich., has become another ordinary American whose life and legacy have been defined by a single extraordinary event that has been branded into this country's conscience.

Aviator Charles Lindbergh made his mark by flying alone across the Atlantic in May 1927. Lawyer Francis Scott Key penned the poem "*The Star-Spangled Banner*" soon after the British stopped shelling Fort Mifflin in September 1814. African-American Rosa Parks refused to give her seat to a white man on a bus in Montgomery, Ala., in December 1955.

Many people will long remember the beaten and battered faces of Stone, SSgt. Andrew Ramirez and Spc. Steven Gonzales beamed around the world following their ambush and capture in Macedonia near the Yugoslavia border on March 31, a few days after NATO began its air campaign to stop the killing of ethnic Albanians in the Serbian province of Kosovo.

Images of the three considerably healthier soldiers standing with the Rev. Jesse Jackson after he secured their release in Yugoslavia on May 2 were also credited with reinforcing America's resolve to help the people in a distant land regain their freedom from oppression.

"It gave the average American a reason to be



interested in that conflict," acknowledged Stone. "It brought it home for many Americans. It gave people a face to put on the struggle."

Stone's observations about how much he now values the freedom that most Americans take for granted and that he is still very much a soldier have gained him plenty of attention.

"By appreciating that freedom more, it makes you also appreciate those who have defended it for so long and who sacrificed themselves to provide that freedom to you," he said. "When it's gone, you really appreciate those who made those sacrifices in the past."

Stone and Gonzales have left the active Army and returned to their homes in Michigan and Texas. Ramirez has been transferred to Fort Irwin, Calif.

As far as he is concerned, however, Stone is still the same soldier he has been since 1991 — who did his duty in Europe with the 1st Infantry Division and who is now assigned to the National Guard.

"I'm still in the Army. I'm still a soldier," stressed Stone. "As I came out of that situation, I was interested in finding something else to do, to take a different direction."

"I found a great opportunity in the Guard to continue to serve the country, to be in the Army for the same reasons I was before, and to come home and serve the state where I grew up and my community that showed so much support during that ordeal."

That makes Stone a spokesman for *The Army* advocated by Gen. Shinseki in a letter of intent that he issued when he became Chief of Staff.

"We are *The Army* — totally integrated into a oneness of purpose — no longer the Total Army, the One Army," wrote Shinseki. "We acknowledge the components and their varying organizational strengths. We will work to structure *The Army* accordingly."

Stone explained he has wanted to be a soldier since first reading about the Civil War and World War II when he was 10. Sixteen years later, after 32 difficult days as a prisoner of war, he has come to terms with the idea that he and the two other soldiers are considered heroes by a country determined to honor all of its warriors after ignoring the veterans of Vietnam.

But one of his messages is that he believes he is in the company of many heroes.

"Anyone who sacrifices themselves for someone else is a hero in my book," said Stone. "It doesn't matter whether you're serving in time of war, being in battle, or whether you're continually training to be ready to go fight. You're a hero. You are defending the freedoms and the values that we have as a country."

NEWS

MAKERS

Compiled by MSgt. John Malthaner
National Guard Bureau

Soldiers with Company A, 1st Battalion, 104th Infantry were recognized as the "best squad" in the 29th Infantry Division after putting their small unit tactics to the test.

The squad included: Squad Leader SSgt. Kenneth Pitts, who was named the division's best-trained lightfighter, Sgt. James Erickson, Spc. David Whitehead, Spc. Matthew Turner, Spc. Donald Soja, Spc. Leshawne Perry, Spc. Michael Masse, Spc. James Todd McAfee and PFC Robert Lovely.

"It is not often that the top squad prize is won by a unit outside Virginia or Maryland," noted Brig. Gen. H. Stephen Blum, 29th commander. "It illustrates the top notch training that soldiers of the 26th Brigade received under the dedicated leadership of Col. (Arthur) Wyman."

Members of the Company A squad are based at the armory in Agawam, Mass.

Fifty-four reserve component officers graduated from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff Officer Reserve Component Course Dec. 17. Maryland Army National Guard Maj. Jeffrey A. Connelly was the top graduate.

The 19-week reserve component course is conducted each academic year concurrent with term 1 of the Command and General Staff Officer Course. Reserve component students are integrated with active component students.

This year, 27 Army Guard and 27 Army Reserve officer students integrated into a student body of 1,057 officers from all U.S. services and 79 countries.

Col. Baron Hignite, the North Carolina National Guard Recruiting and Retention manager, presented a state flag and a letter of commendation to Dr. Donald Cameron, president of the five-campus Guilford Technical Community College, headquartered in Greensboro.

Cameron participated in the first Distance Learning Program, taught from Fort Sill, Okla., to members of the Tarheel State's 5th Battalion, 113th Field Artillery. During their transition to the Army's newest weapons system, the Multiple Launching Rocket System, more than 150 citizen-soldier's used Guilford's classrooms to convert military occupational specialties (to 13P and 13M).

"Technology will enable our soldiers to train up for our continuation as full partners with every available resource, the combined facilities of North Carolina's institutions and the Army's best instructors," Hignite said.

Ohio Col. Frank Titus, a civil affairs mission coordinator with the Air National Guard, orchestrated the Humanitarian Law Symposium, a first-of-its-kind event at Capital University Law School in Columbus recently.

Air Guard judge advocates from 13 states lectured civilian and military lawyers, and paralegals



Col. Arthur Wyman (left) accepts the 29th Division's best squad trophy.



Command and General Staff Officer course top grad, Maj. Jeffrey Connelly (right).



Col. Frank Titus orchestrated a law symposium for peacekeepers.

on topics ranging from "support to civil police in peacekeeping" to "Women, children, gender and cultural issues during peacekeeping."

The conference focused on several peacekeeping issues, including how peacekeepers initiate and implement non-violent conflict resolutions.

"Kofi Annan, secretary-general for the United Nations, announced that peacekeepers would adhere to the 1949 Geneva Convention. They are required to know domestic laws and customs that govern the designated country," Titus said.

After writing a concept paper based on Persian Gulf after-action reports compiled by Air Force judge advocates, Titus was selected by Joint Chiefs of Staff to discuss his research with the United Nations Peacekeeping Organization in New York.

For the first time, Air Guard judge advocates were used as peacekeeping instructors for civilian and military people serving in that capacity around the world.

The following Air Guard units received the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for meritorious service:

- 102nd Fighter Wing, Mass.
- 104th Weather Flight, Md.
- 104th Fighter Wing, Mass.
- 106th Rescue Wing, N.Y.
- 110th Fighter Wing, Mich.
- 113th Wing, D.C.
- 117th Air Control Squadron, Ga.
- 123rd Air Control Squadron, Ohio
- 123rd Airlift Wing, Ky.
- 125th Fighter Wing, Fla.
- 128th Air Refueling Wing, Wis.
- 132nd Fighter Wing, Iowa
- 139th Airlift Wing, Mo.
- 143rd Combat Communications Squadron, Wash.
- 148th Fighter Wing, Minn.
- 155th Air Refueling Wing, Neb.
- 159th Operations Group, La.
- 175th Wing, Md.
- 176th Logistics Support Flight, Alaska
- 176th Wing, Alaska
- 183rd Fighter Wing, Ill.
- 184th Bomber Wing, Kan.
- 193rd Special Operations Wing, Pa.
- 200th RED HORSE Squadron, Ohio
- 202nd RED HORSE Squadron, Fla.
- 214th Engineering Installation Squadron, La.
- 215th Engineering Installation Squadron, Wash.
- 228th Combat Communications Squadron, Tenn.
- 231st Combat Communications Squadron, D.C.
- 251st Combat Communications Group, Ohio
- 254th Air Base Group, Guam
- 282nd Combat Communications Squadron, R.I.

ACTIVE ARMY

FROM PAGE 3

COMMAND

"It's just a great way of integrating the Army, and it offers us great promise for this most significant issue of developing confidence in one another," said Schultz of the decision to give an Army Guard officer an active duty command.

"I want to contribute to the Army's success and contribute to the Army's mission," added Schultz who last spring personally nominated Audino for the tour that is an extension of the command integration program begun more than three years ago.

Active Army Lt. Col. John Hennigan took command of the Army Guard's 1st Battalion, 141st Field Artillery in Louisiana for two years in October 1996. Since then, three other high-ranking active Army officers have assumed Army Guard commands, and 12 others have taken on operations, executive officer and chief of staff duties in other units across the country.

Audino has benefited from former Army Chief of Staff Gen. Dennis Reimer's December 1998 directive to allow Guard officers to assume similar positions in a one-for-one exchange.

Active Army Lt. Col. Michael Chesney is expected to take command of a Vermont Army Guard armor battalion later

this year. Also this year, Colorado Army Guard Maj. Kenneth Lull has been slated to take charge of an active Army field artillery battalion at Fort Sill, and active Army Lt. Col. Gary Geibel will take command of a Colorado Guard artillery battalion.

"This is one more important step toward a fully seamless Army," said Lt. Gen. James Hill, I Corps commander, who has welcomed Audino's move to expansive Fort Lewis which, along with the 500-square-mile Yakima Training Center, is considered one of the Army's most pristine posts. Majestic Mount Rainier towers over the landscape.

"We're going to have this change of command, and an active unit will walk off with a commander," Hill added. "The fact he is a National Guard commander will be irrelevant to everybody. He'll be a commander, and that's an important step."

Becoming part of Gen. Shinseki's push for a more mobile army has been a bonus for Audino who learned of his selection last May. Shinseki replaced Reimer as Army chief of staff in July. He outlined his plans for the dramatic transformation during the Association of the U.S. Army's annual meeting in Washington, D.C., last Oct. 12.

"I was at that meeting," explained Audino who had moved to Washington for full-time duty with the National Guard Bureau in January 1997. He was a Congressional Fellow and the military legis-



Photo by MSgt. Bob Haskell

HISTORIC EXCHANGE — Lt. Col. Ernest Audino (right) accepts the 1-33rd Armor colors from Col. Mark Hertling, commander of the 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division.

lative assistant for U.S. Sen. James Jeffords of Vermont when he learned that he and his wife Marie and their two children would next be moving across the country to the other Washington.

"When Gen. Shinseki said the move to new, lighter, wheeled vehicles would involve units at Fort Lewis, it certainly got my attention," Audino recalled. "I was

pleasantly surprised and excited at the same time.

"I missed being in uniform full-time. I missed being in the military community full-time," said Audino of his decision to return to active duty after leaving the Army in September 1989.

He earned his law degree from Vermont Law School in 1993, and he practiced environmental law for three years in Montpelier. He also rose to executive officer, second in command, within a Vermont Army Guard armored battalion headquarters.

CSM Neil Ciotola is an old friend from his Army past who called Audino "a magnificent man" and the right National Guard officer for the job at Fort Lewis.

Ciotola was his platoon sergeant for 18 months in Germany when Audino, a new second lieutenant out of West Point, was the 2nd Platoon leader in Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 33rd Armor.

"He was young, brash and full of confidence," Ciotola recalled. "He also told us there was a lot he didn't know, and that we would have to teach him."

Ciotola clearly made a lasting impression. Audino introduced Ciotola on that Wednesday morning at Fort Lewis as his new command sergeant major after greeting the soldiers in his old battalion that is now facing many changes.

One thing, however, has not changed. "There's no substitute for shooting straight," Audino observed. "That's still the job at hand."

His Honor

Pennsylvania Army Guard SFC Douglas Maugans (left), an air traffic controller with the Keystone State's Company H, 104th Aviation currently serving with his unit in Bosnia, takes his oath of office as the newly-elected mayor of Marysville, Pa. Running as an incumbent, Maugans won the Nov. 2 election to serve as the mayor of the small town in south central Pennsylvania.

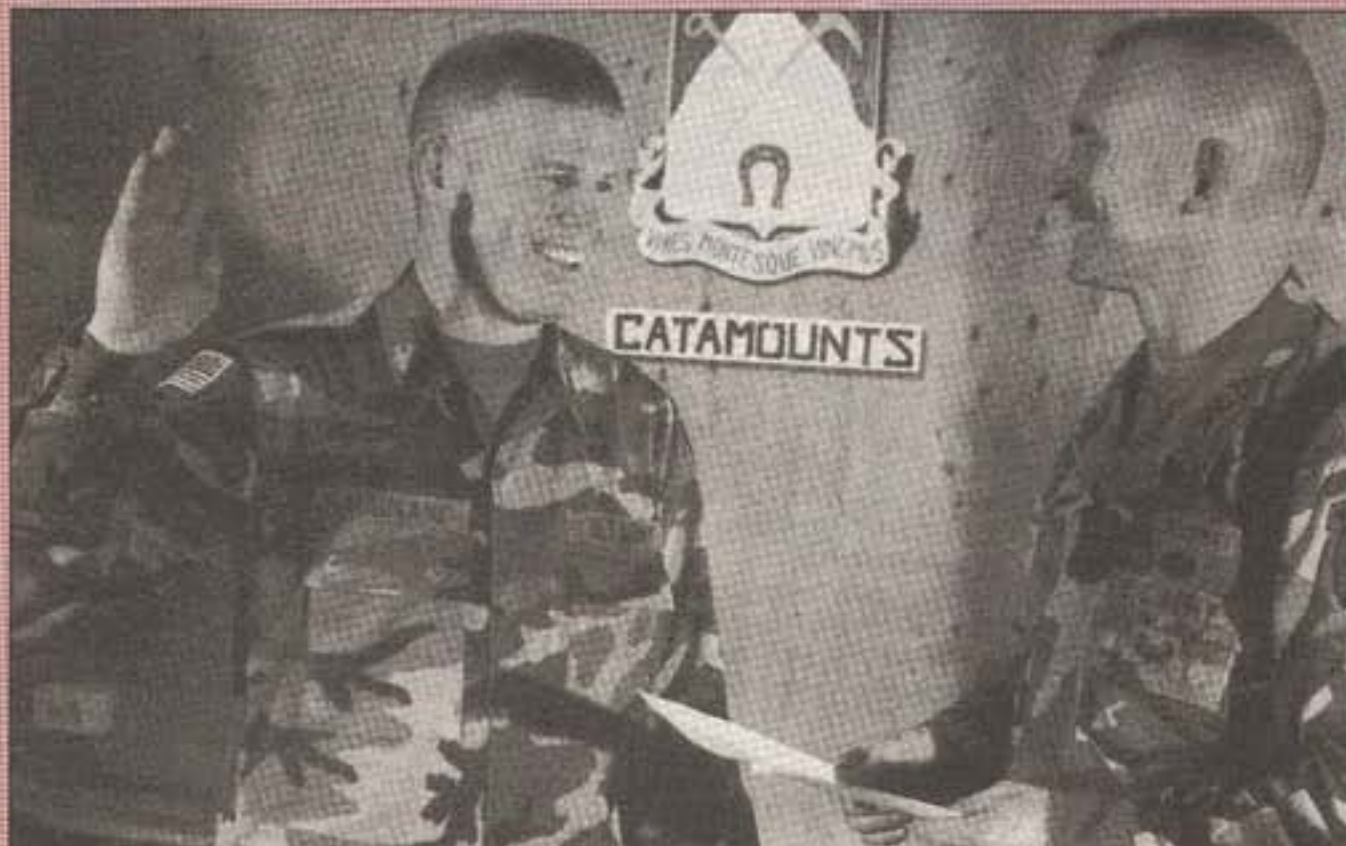


Photo courtesy of the Pennsylvania National Guard



STATES

• Empire Example • G.I. Guy • Targeted for Kosovo

NEW YORK

Empire State Guard leaders taught the Guard's crises management and emergency-response roles to senior defense and security policy officials from 26 European and Asian countries recently.

The special seminar was part of the George C. Marshall Center for Security Studies' 15-week course in democratic defense management. Based in Garmisch, Germany, the center creates a stable security environment in Europe and Eurasia by promoting peaceful engagement and partnerships.

"Designating the New York National Guard to provide this teaching block is a natural given their leadership role as one of the premier reserve military forces in the nation," said Dr. Paul Horman, course director.

Nations represented included several former republics of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

New York Guard instructors taught from their own experience, including their rapid response to the 1996 TWA Flight 800 air disaster and the January 1998 ice storm in the Northeast.

Class members also learned about the Guard's history, demographics and changing roles and the states innovative GuardHELP program, which puts New York Guard units in local neighborhoods where they provide community improvements.

MARYLAND

A Regular 'JOE'

Maryland Army Guard SSgt. Charles Bury, a member of the 2nd Battalion, 115th Infantry, poses with a G.I. Joe sculpted by Hasbro Inc., in his likeness. The full-time Baltimore County policeman won the toy manufacturer's nationwide essay contest celebrating the 35th anniversary of the world's first action figure.



Photo courtesy of Hasbro

IDAHO

Thirty-four members of the Boise-based 124th Security Forces Squadron deployed to South Korea recently for an annual exercise that helped train U.S. and host-nation forces to defend the peninsula.

Foal Eagle '99 tested rear-area protection operations and major command, control and communications systems.

The two-week exercise involved about 30,000 soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines from every branch of the U.S. military. The training also included more than 500,000 Republic of Korea soldiers.

The Idaho security squadron, which was participating in the maneuvers for the first time, was the largest Air Guard unit invited to the exercise.

The unit performed perimeter defense and patrolling at Osan Air Base. They also were tested on their ability to rapidly deploy forces in response to hostile or emergency situations.

The Guardsmen and women used night-vision devices, mini-intrusion detection systems, early warning devices and weapon systems during the exercise.

Foal Eagle was the largest exercise the Idaho security force was ever involved in. The perimeter defense alone included nearly 700 security people.

MINNESOTA

By Maj. Pauline Geraci
Minnesota National Guard

Forty-five members of the Gopher State Army National Guard's Battery E, 151st Field Artillery (Target Acquisition), 34th Infantry Division (Red Bull) were ordered to federal active duty and deployed to Kosovo in an effort to help maintain the peace in the troubled region.

This same unit provided a contingent of 31 citizen-soldiers to support U.S. operations in Bosnia from August 1996 to April 1997. Ten of those same soldiers have again deployed to Kosovo.

The unit, based in Anoka, spent a few days at

the U.S. Army's Fort Benning, Ga., undergoing theater-specific pre-deployment training, before traveling to Kosovo.

The citizen-soldiers are expected to serve on active duty for approximately six months, but no end date has been given. Legally, they could be on duty for up to nine months.

The unit's mission is to use radar equipment to detect and track the firing of various types of ammunition (primary artillery and mortars.)

In Kosovo, the radar will be used to ensure compliance with the Dayton Accord cease fire agreement. It also is a "force protection" measure that will help ensure the safety of United States and North Atlantic Treaty Organization

troops serving in the region.

"As the role of the military changes, this is another example of how our active duty military forces cannot perform their mission without the support of the National Guard," noted a Minnesota spokesperson.

More than 200 Gopher State Air National Guard men and women supported humanitarian airlift operations to Albania and Macedonia last spring and summer.

Twenty-one citizen-soldiers with the state's Army National Guard -- all air traffic controllers -- are currently on active duty in Kuwait supporting Operation Southern Watch, an effort to enforce the no-fly zone over Iraq.



HISTORY

• From the Dick Act to Y2K

Century of CHANGE

As the new century begins it seems appropriate to reflect on what the Guard accomplished during the 1900s, a period that saw the Guard change immensely.

That change began with the passage of the Dick Act of 1903. The Dick Act -- named after Ohio congressman and Guard general Charles Dick -- gave birth to the modern National Guard. The act granted the organized militia (later called the National Guard) federal funding, which helped better equip units and pay for summer camps. In return, the various state militias agreed to conform to federal standards for training.

Federal funding of the Guard would increase dramatically in the 20th century, but each new increase would carry with it added missions. Largely ignored by both the states and the federal government in the 19th Century, the Guard became the tool of choice in the 20th Century for a wide variety of missions -- fighting wars, drug interdiction and disaster relief, to name just a few.

This increasing reliance on the Guard also prompted a number of involuntarily call-ups for deployment abroad. This activity, taken for granted today, was cause for significant legal debate at the turn of the century. The Constitution states that the militia can be called out only "to execute the laws of the Union, suppress insurrection, and repel invasions." However, the federal government was not going to spend millions of dollars on the Guard if it was limited to be a domestic police force, with the additional mission to defend against Canada and Mexico.

New laws were passed in 1908 and 1916 expanding the length of time and the geographic area Guardmembers could serve. Even so, when 158,664 citizen-soldiers were called up to protect the U.S. border from the incursions of Mexican bandit Pancho Villa, they were not allowed to cross into Mexican territory. Instead, Gen. "Black Jack" Pershing used Regular Army troops to pursue Villa into Mexico, while the Guard protected the border.

As the Mexican border call-up was winding down, German submarine warfare was dragging the isolationist United States into the first World War. WWI brought on a total mobilization of the Guard -- by August 5, 1917 all 379,701 Guardsmen were on active duty. The Guard's 26th and 42nd Divisions rushed 'Over There' in the

winter of 1917, among the first American troops to see combat.

Along with the 28th Division, these units were essential in stopping the last great German offensive in the spring of 1918.

World War I was truly the Guard's War. Forty percent of the divisions to see combat were Guard. The 30th Division, from Tennessee and the Carolinas, earned more Medals of Honor (12) than any other. Of the eight divisions rated the best by the German General Staff, six were Guard -- the 26th, 28th, 32nd, 33rd, 37th and 42nd.

People tend to forget that by the time the U.S. entered WWII in late 1941, many Guardsmen had been on active duty for over a year. In September 1940, the first of 300,034 Guardsmen reported for active duty. It was the largest peacetime mobilization in U.S. history.

At war's onset there were 18 Guard divisions, and 16 in the Regular Army. A 19th Guard division, the Americal, was organized in the Pacific, and three National Guard regiments were used to "round out" (a later term) three Regular divisions (the 7th, 8th and 25th Infantry Divisions) that had only two regiments in them. Twenty nine Guard flying squadrons joined the nation's active duty Army Air Forces.

Wherever blood was being shed, Guard divisions were there. They made assault landings on beaches across the world -- the 34th in North Africa, "Texas's" 36th at Salerno and Southern France, the 45th at Sicily and Southern France as well. The 31st made an assault landing in New Guinea. The 37th and 40th landed in Luzon, while the Americal landed in the southern Philippines. Of course, the 29th Infantry Division came across in the first wave at Normandy.

In 1947, with the creation of a separate Air Force, the National Guard split into Army and Air components. Thus, before "Jointness" became fashionable in the rest of the Department of Defense, it was being practiced (with occasional arguments and misunderstandings) at the highest levels of the National Guard.

The new Air National Guard got a chance to prove its value almost immediately. Eighty percent of the Air Guard (45,594 men) were called up for the Korean War, along with 138,600 Army Guardsmen. Two tactical fighter wings, consisting of six squadrons, went to Korea, while another 10 squadrons deployed to Europe to make sure the Warsaw Pact didn't take advantage of the "distraction" in Korea. The Army Guard sent two divisions (the 40th and 45th Infantry) and 40 other combat and combat support units to Korea. An even larger contingent -- including another two divisions, the 28th and 43rd Infantry, went to NATO.

The second half of the 20th century would see far more deployments, though none would ever equal in scale the



Photo courtesy of NGAUS

FUNDING a FUTURE -- Charles Dick, an Ohio congressman and National Guard general, helped usher in the modern Guard with the passage of 1903's Dick Act.



GUARD HISTORY

By Capt. Les' Melnyk
Army Guard Historian

three mobilizations of the first half of the century.

During the Berlin Crisis of 1961-62, 44,371 Army Guardsmen and 21,067 citizen-airmen were mobilized, including the first Guard women. Most were on active duty for about a year. Later that decade, following the seizure of the U.S.S. Pueblo and the launching of the Tet offensive in Vietnam, 10,511 airmen and 12,234 soldiers were mobilized. Four tactical fighter squadrons deployed to Vietnam, while the Army Guard sent over 7,000 soldiers -- mostly as fillers.

In evaluating the aftermath of the war -- the first one the U.S. had ever lost -- senior military leaders concluded that without public support, wars could not be won. That support would only come

if the Guard and Reserve, rooted in thousands of communities around the nation, were involved.

As a result, the number of Guard deployments -- many having nothing to do with fighting wars -- would grow remarkably.

The trend began with the mobilization of 4,481 Army Guardmembers for the Cuban Refugee crisis in 1980. The 1983 Grenada invasion saw 250 Air Guardsmen mobilized. In 1989 Operation Just Cause in Panama saw almost 1,000 Guardmembers mobilized.

Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm in 1990-91 showed the success and the failure of the Department of Defense's new policy regarding the use of the Guard and Reserve.

While the Air Guard and the Air Force integrated in a virtually seamless manner, and thousands of Army Guardmembers provided the necessary combat support and service support for the forces in the desert, the integration of Guard maneuver brigades flopped. The "Roundout" concept, designed in the 1970s to force the Active Army to deploy Guard combat brigades when it sent its divisions to war, was ignored. With the exception of two field artillery brigades (who performed extremely well), no Army Guard combat units made it to Southwest Asia. "Roundout" was scrapped after the war.

Despite losing over 100,000 positions between 1989 and 1999, the rate of deployments for the Guard picked up in the 90s. The Guard help *Restore Hope* in Somalia in 1993 and *Uphold Democracy* in Haiti from 1994-96. Peacekeeping missions in Bosnia, Iraq and Kosovo are still ongoing.

Of course, this list of deployments doesn't begin to cover the times the Guard has mobilized for natural disasters or to maintain law and order. In 1993, nearly 8,000 Guardsmen and women were called out during the great floods in the Midwest. The previous year 11,398 Californians were called up to quell rioting following the Rodney King verdict.

That list doesn't address the tens of thousand of Guardmembers who have volunteered around the globe, building roads and schools in impoverished Central and South American countries, peacekeeping in the Sinai, or supporting scientific research in Antarctica.

Two things are certain: no one could have predicted the legacy left by the Guard of the 20th century; and we can only dream about what the Guard will be called upon to do in the next century.



TRAINING



TEXAS TOUGH -- A C-23 Sherpa (above) departs Soto Cano Air Base bound for Guatemala. Texas Army Guard Sgt. Kevin Locke (right), a Sherpa flight engineer, signals a forklift operator to reposition a crate.



Texas Sherpa crew faces unique challenges flying in Central America

Photos by SFC Brenda Benner

Earning their Mountain Wings

By SFC Brenda Benner
Texas National Guard

The pilots stared ahead nervously, scarcely able to believe what awaited them.

There was only half a runway, crowded at one end by a large hill, power lines and a shack. Construction workers, armed with hand-held hammers and chisels, chipped away at the dilapidated tarmac.

Landing on their first approach was not an option. First, they made a low pass at 500 feet to clear the area of workers, pedestrians, cyclists, horses and hogs.

The scene, complete with a jungle, is stereotypically third world. And the flying -- the old-fashioned, seat-of-your-pants kind -- is simply out-of-this-world.

There was no doubt that these pilots are not landing in the flatlands of Texas. This adventurous landing came compliments of Puerto Barrios, Guatemala. The C-23 Sherpa crew from the Texas Army National Guard, earned their mountain wings while supporting Operation New Horizons 1999.

One of only two Sherpas in Texas, and one of just 43 in the Army's inventory, this boxy, twin-engine transport provided a unique airborne silhouette in the skies over Latin America.

During a recent assignment at Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras, "Ol' Betsy," as her crew affectionately calls her, joined National Guard aviators and aircraft from several other states to haul tons of cargo and people throughout a four-country region.

They did not leave Texas empty-handed. Their plane, fully loaded with a surgical team and cases of medical supplies and instruments, helped keep a humanitarian mission bound for western Honduras on course.

Without the support of the Texas Guard's Detachment 2, Company H, 171st Aviation, many of the medical missions originating in the Lone Star State would never materialize.

CWO James Jackson, the aviation detachment's commander, said that the mission provided many interesting challenges for his crew of three.

"Flying in such mountainous terrain and getting used to new procedures is a good experience for us," he said. "We're dealing with a steep learning curve."

Although the experienced crew had logged hundreds of flight hours elsewhere, there's no substitute for landing at unfamiliar airstrips while communicating with Spanish-speaking air traffic controllers and airport officials. Fortunately, their broken English was more advanced than the Sherpa crew's Spanish.

Jackson said that he understood about half of the instructions and wished he had an interpreter.

"Once we feel we know what's going on, we land," he said.

Sgt. Kevin Locke, a flight engineer, said he has enjoyed this particular Honduran mission.

"It's spontaneous every day and I'm having a blast," he said.

As a flight engineer, one of Locke's many responsibilities is supervising the loading and unloading of cargo. He ensures the load's weight and balance are perfect for flying. Often he has to make last minute reconfigurations of the Sherpa's removable seats to accommodate the load.

"At Soto Cano, we get our missions a day or so in advance," said Locke. "I never know what type of cargo I'm going to pick up. One day it's a helicopter engine, the next it's 1,000 pounds of medical supplies."

Cargo concerns are only one piece of

the complex puzzle that makes this Central America flying experience so unique.

Rugged terrain and weather must also be factored in.

Flying higher than is necessary back home, the unpressurized Sherpa must cruise at 12,000 to 13,000 feet. At this altitude, the pilots rely on their oxygen masks to help combat the thin air.

Routine afternoon thunderstorms build up on the mountain ranges and sweep over the valleys with short notice.

"It gets bad out here when they kick up," said Locke. "The mountains hide the storms. We can't fly over most of them because they are 40,000 to 50,000 feet high."

"They are really humongous, and they pack a lot of turbulence and lightning," Jackson added.

Completely avoiding these high energy storms is not as easy as it seems. If a proposed bypass route delivers the aircraft over a neighboring country's airspace, the lack of prior diplomatic clearances can bust a mission.

Naturally, aviators are put at ease when watched by the enormous "eye in the sky." But radar coverage is not 100 percent all-inclusive in Central America.

"The signals from navigational aids are not as strong as back home," noted Jackson. "We lose contact with the air traffic controllers on every flight. It's unnerving during periods when no one is watching us, so we continuously make position reports."