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# THE ON GUARD

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## Guard humanitarians help Honduras rebuild

### ■ Task Force Sula: South Carolina engineers raise \$13 million 'Horizons'

By MSgt. Bob Haskell  
National Guard Bureau

First he built it. Then he blessed it. The modest two-room home SSgt. Richard Mincey helped build for a Honduran family left virtually homeless since last fall by Hurricane Mitch was just one example of how he and other Guard men and women touched the heart of Honduras following the opening ceremonies for a \$13 million New Horizons 99 humanitarian mission Feb. 24.

A self-employed carpenter who also served as the Task Force Sula chaplain, Mincey showed a delegation led by James Creagan, United States ambassador to Honduras, the home he and other Guard and Reserve volunteers built in a cornfield near the northern city of El Progreso.

"May God make this a house that will be His house here in Honduras," prayed Mincey, before presenting the seven members of the Pedro Antonio family with a picture of Jesus Christ a week into the Easter season. The 31-year-old is studying to become a Nazarene pastor.

Observing that President William Clinton vowed the U.S. would help its Central American neighbors devastated by one of the strongest Atlantic storms ever recorded, Creagan told approximately 100 people attending the ceremony that "our men and women in uniform in the National Guard and Reserve units represent the best of this tradition in the U.S."

"They have come to Honduras as neigh-

bors to help improve the opportunities for schooling and health care that they would want for themselves," added Creagan beside a cement-block clinic being built by South Carolina Guard soldiers.

Brig. Gen. Don Roberto Lazarus Lozano, Honduras' Vice Minister of Defense, welcomed the Americans to his homeland's Sula River Valley for the first of this year's military engineering and medical exercises helping to promote peace and stability in Central America.

"As we speak, a second set of projects is ready to begin in the Aguan Valley to restore roads and lines of communication and to open new possibilities for our neigh-



Photo by MSgt. Bob Haskell

**BUILT-IN BLESSING** -- SSgt. Richard Mincey (above), a carpenter studying to become a pastor, built and blessed a home for a Honduran family. South Carolina Army Guard engineers (right) cut through reinforced metal bars.

bors in that [northern] part of the country," said Creagan.

Maj. Gen. Stanhope Spears, the Palmetto State's adjutant general, and Brig. Gen. Harry Burchstead, deputy adjutant general, also attended because 138 Army Guard engineers from that state formed



Photo by Spc. Robert Connell





## COMMENTARY

• Bob Haskell: Reporter-at-Large

## ABOUT the PAPER

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## Birth of an international reporter

By MSgt. Bob Haskell  
National Guard Bureau

Recording history can be like walking down a dark alley. You never know if you'll get smacked in the head.

That's how I remember the rainy Wednesday morning of March 6, 1996, in Brussels, Belgium. A piece of world history was about to slap me in the face, and I didn't have a clue it was coming.

Furthermore, I never dreamed it would lead to April's North Atlantic Treaty Organization summit here in Washington, D.C., for new members Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic — roughly three years later.

Here's how it happened.

I had flown to Europe to cover that year's visit by Lt. Gen. Edward Baca, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, and nearly half of this country's state adjutants general. There were more stars on that plane, it seemed, than in the Milky Way.

It was all pretty new to me. Four months earlier I had been the sports editor for the daily newspaper in Bangor, Maine, focusing on high school basketball and the University of Maine hockey program's difficulties with the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

It was a very big deal until the National Guard Bureau beckoned me to

Washington during Christmas week 1995 to report on Army Guard units being mobilized for peacekeeping duties in Bosnia.

I had been a public affairs NCO recording the Maine National Guard's activities for over 20 years. I had made a few REFORGER trips to Germany before the Cold War ended with the crash of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

But I never dreamed that I'd be sitting in a crowded room at NATO headquarters outside Brussels furiously taking notes as diplomats from the three former Warsaw Pact countries implored our National Guard generals to help them get into NATO. Bangor, Maine, suddenly seemed a long way away.

Robert Hunter, the U.S. ambassador to NATO, made a compelling and very quotable case about how the National Guard could support this effort because of its four-year-old State Partnership affiliations with Eastern European countries anxious to learn the lessons of democracy.

The three diplomats, ambassadors from Poland and Hungary and a general from the Czech Republic, were not kidding. They wanted their countries admitted to NATO in the worst way.

They hoped their associations with, respectively, Illinois, Ohio and Texas and Nebraska, would help their collective cause.

This was big stuff! This was the biggest story I had ever — ever — cov-

ered. This was something right out of *The New York Times*. I had grown up in small town Levant, Maine. It was called being raised "in the sticks." An education degree from the University of Maine, 23 years at the *Bangor Daily News*, and a book I had authored about a Maine Civil War hero were the high points on my resume.

I was not exactly prepared to venture into the main stream of international diplomacy for the Guard Bureau.

Nervous? Like a cat trapped in a dog kennel.

The day did not go smoothly.

I realized, for example, I had left my NATO security pass in my room on the 12th floor after I had boarded the bus with all of those generals outside our hotel. I bolted back into the hotel to get that pass, hoping the bus would be there when I got back. It was. Thank God.

I ditched my small tape recorder after being informed that electronic devices were not permitted inside NATO.

I kept my camera and then worried that someone would take it away from me. I thought about hiding it. But I'd look like I was eight months pregnant if I tried to carry it under my raincoat. So I hung the bag from my shoulder and walked into NATO headquarters, hoping no one would say anything. No one did.

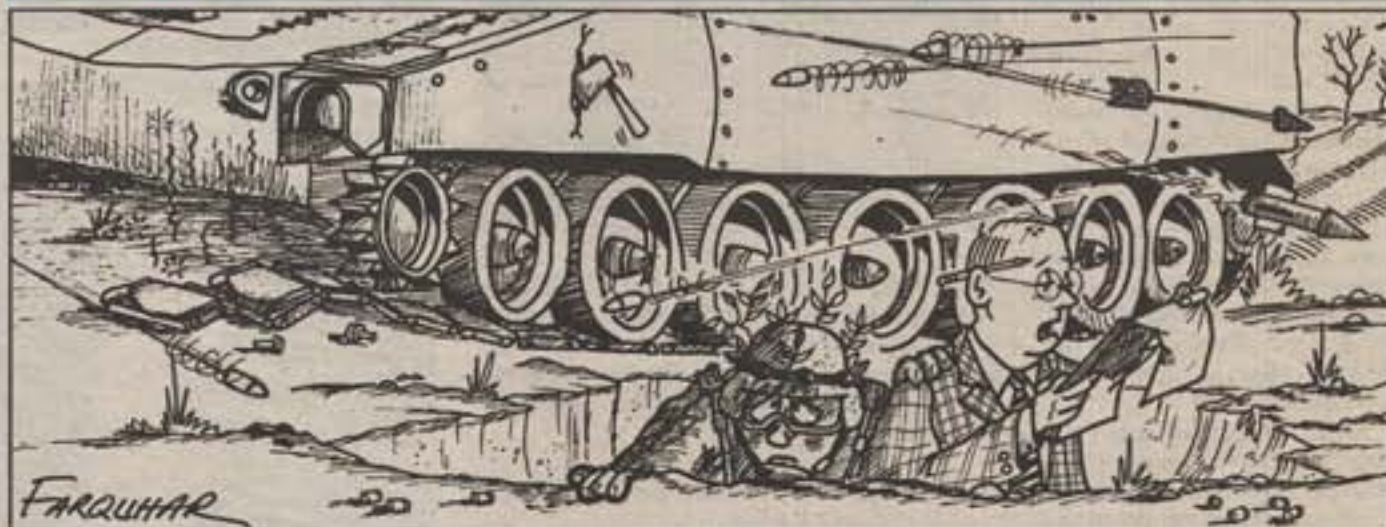
That day's agenda read disarmingly simple: A meeting with the three foreign diplomats and Ambassador Hunter. Once the meeting started, it was obvious that this was no ordinary get-together.

See NATO, Page 4

## GUARD TOONS

By Lyle Farquhar

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"Regrettably, Sgt. Davis, sub-section C, paragraph-4 of your auto club contract prohibits towing during maneuvers."





## IN THE NEWS

• 'Oak' Ousted • Fraternization Explained • Tuition Benefit

# Coronet Oak mission grounded

## ■ Sad Occasion: Ceremony honors 20-plus years of humanitarian support in Latin America

By Lt. Col. Jean Marie Beall  
Maryland National Guard

They were all invited to the party. And many, out of respect, came. They flew in from Georgia, Maryland, West Virginia, Texas, Oklahoma and Wyoming, each touching down where it all began 22 years ago at Howard Air Base, Panama.

The party, or the Feb. 17 closing ceremony for Coronet Oak, was remembered by crew members who flew the humanitarian mission with palpable sadness.

"I felt like I was going to a wake," said Maj. Michael Castaldi, a C-130 pilot in the Maryland Air Guard's 175th Wing of the unit's last mission to Howard.

The first Coronet Oak mission was flown in April 1977 by an active duty crew from Stewart Air Force Base, Tenn. In October 1977, the Air Guard and the Air Force Reserve were given the mission.

The first Guard unit deployed, for what was then called Volant Oak, was California's 146th Airlift Wing. The unit had deployed three months earlier to take 35mm slides of various landing strips in Central and South America. These slides were then used in mandatory safety briefings for follow-on crews. Then Maj. Tandy Boseman (now Maj. Gen.) was the aircraft commander on that mission.

The ceremony itself was simple and classy, with a few commanders representing the Air Force, Air National Guard and the Air Force Reserve, making brief comments.

Brig. Gen. John Schnell, now chief of Staff of the Maryland Air Guard and a C-130 pilot who has flown many Coronet Oak missions, spoke on the Air Guard's behalf.

"I'm honored, but also a bit saddened, to be part of the closing ceremony for this great mission," Schnell said. "Since 1977, Air National Guard units have rotated into Panama 686 times. During those 686 rotations, we have flown in 2,058 aircraft — C-130As, Bs, Es, and H1s, H2s and H3s.

"In terms of people," he continued, "37,730 positions have rotated into this base. I say positions, because many of those 37,730 positions were repeat visitors. Once here, everyone wanted to come back."

Some of those missions required Air Guard crews to fly routine re-supply drops to various Latin American



Photo by Lt. Col. Jean Marie Beall

**SOLID AS OAK**—Georgia TSgt. Steve Harris, a C-130 crew chief with the 165th Airlift Wing, gets his aircraft ready to fly one of the last missions out of Panama.

embassies. But, as one Tennessee C-130 crew could attest, there were times when cargo hauling took on a perilously new meaning.

It was on July 19, 1979, that Capt. Lin Holly piloted a 164th Tactical Airlift Group crew — temporarily based in

■ See CORONET OAK, Page 11

# Army releases new fraternization policy

By SFC Connie E. Dickey  
Army News Service

Officers and enlisted soldiers who are dating have one year to marry or end their relationship, says the recently released U.S. Army policy on fraternization.

That edict was just one of the tenants spelled out in the new "good order and discipline" policy that revises Army Regulation 600-20.

Besides restricting personal relationships between soldiers of different ranks, it also limits private business dealings between officers and

enlisted soldiers. While the policy does not prohibit transactions such as selling a car or renting a house, it does restrict the lending of money or entering into long-term business partnerships.

Guard men and women also will be accountable to the policy.

Guard officers and enlisted soldiers cannot date if either are on active-duty tours or serving in full-time Guard or Reserve positions. However, traditional Guardmembers who have relationships that are primarily based on civilian acquaintanceships are exempt. Personal rela-

tions between Regular Army and Reserve component soldiers are also allowed, with the same stipulation.

The new policy, officials said, is a result of a directive issued by Secretary of Defense William Cohen last July for the armed services to align their fraternization policies.

Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, Patrick Henry, said the policy reflects the need for the military services to have standard rules because of the increasingly joint character of

■ See GOOD ORDER, Page 13

## NATIONAL BRIEFS

### Jordan's late King gets lift

In a gesture of respect, two F-16 fighter jets provided an escort Feb. 4 for the royal plane carrying the seriously ill King Hussein of Jordan back home.

The White House asked the Pentagon to provide the honor guard, and the jets were scrambled from the 148th Fighter Wing of the Minnesota Air National Guard in Duluth.

They accompanied Hussein's plane from Rochester, Minn., after his treatment at the Mayo Clinic, into Canadian air space, where the jets turned back.

National Security Council spokesman P.J. Crowley said the escort was intended "as a demonstration of our great respect for the king as a close ally and friend."

### Children of killed Guardsmen get free tuition in Pennsylvania

Gov. Tom Ridge recently signed legislation providing free college education to surviving children of firefighters, police officers, corrections officers and members of the Pennsylvania National Guard killed in the line of duty.

House Bill 2024 established the Child Beneficiary Education Act, which will provide grants for tuition and room and board to eligible students attending state universities and colleges.

"By providing a college education to these children, we are helping to ensure that the tragedy of their loss does not reduce their chances of a good education and a better life," Ridge said.

Acting Keystone State Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. William B. Lynch, was grateful to the governor and the state legislature for including the National Guard in the landmark legislation.

"This legislation provides one more level of purity and support for the families of Guardmembers," Lynch said.

As stated in the legislation, Guardmembers are eligible if they are killed in the line of duty in "other than federal status." Benefits would be amended to Guardmembers killed in the line of duty during drill weekends and annual training.

In addition, the legislation is retroactive to 1976. Both Army and Air National Guard personnel specialists, said Guard officials, are currently reviewing all line-of-duty fatalities since that year. They will, in turn, notify eligible families.



## NATO

From Page 2

Thankfully, my photographer friend, MSgt. John Thornton, started recording the Kodak moments. I sat against the wall and began filling up my note pad, praying I would not run out of paper, wishing for my tape recorder.

Other things concerned me.

- The Guard Bureau's public affairs chief, Dan Donohue, was part of the delegation. I figured that if I booted this story, I'd be on the next flight to Bangor.

- The new laptop I had bought for the trip didn't work at all like the desktop computer in my cubicle back in Virginia.

- I could barely see the notes I was writing because my good reading glasses were back home, broken.

- I wished I had gone to Princeton.

Somehow, everything came together.

Twenty-eight years of hammering out stories about discontented college students, traffic accidents, fires and basketball games for weekly and daily newspapers served me well.

I wrote the NATO piece as my eyes strained to focus through my old glasses.

The story passed Mr. Donohue's muster -- after two or three rewrites.

It was published in the Army's *Soldiers* magazine the following June. "The Guard Goes International." You can look it up.

That meeting became a milestone in Edward Baca's four-year legacy as the National Guard's global general.

And this April I get to witness the ceremonies and celebrations for three nations once considered communist enemies as they join one of the world's premier alliances for peace.

Did my story about that Wednesday meeting outside Brussels help the cause of world peace? Probably not. But I'd like to think of it as chicken soup. It probably didn't hurt.

There are some things I do know as we approach the historic NATO summit. The laptop's working fine. I'll wear my good glasses. And I won't forget my security pass.

## Kuwait deployment 'endurable'

## ■ Eye on Iraq: Air Guardmembers from six states making due in desert

By MSgt. Bob Haskell  
National Guard Bureau

**H**og Rock, Camel's Hump and Pilot Town have become important places for nearly 250 members of the Air National Guard who are discovering some of the comforts of home at an air base in the middle of Kuwait's flat and barren desert.

Hog Rock is the dining hall. Camel's Hump is the NCO club. Pilot Town is a complex of trailers where the officers live two to a room.

The base of 1,300 Air Force personnel may not be heaven, but it is hardly hell for the Air Guard people from six states. They have come together to help patrol Iraq's southern no-fly zone in more than a dozen ground support, tank-killing A-10 Thunderbolts.

"There are not many amenities," reported Maryland Air Guard Maj. Craig Wackford. "The recreation center tries to schedule many events to occupy individuals' free time. However, there is not a great deal of free time."

"Everyone is working 12 or more hours per day supporting operations. The highlight of the day is partaking in the ice cream in the dining facility, Hog Rock," Wackford added.

He is the executive officer for the 104th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron that includes approximately 200 Air Guard pi-

lots and support people from Maryland, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Michigan and Alabama. Another 40 Guardmembers are pulling personnel, civil engineering, communications and security duty.

Maryland Col. Walter Thilly commands the Air Guard squadron that began supporting Southern Watch operations for 90 days on Feb. 1. The A-10 aircraft are from Maryland, Pennsylvania and Connecticut.

It is a tense time in the Persian Gulf because Iraqi warplanes and air defense systems have routinely challenged and targeted allied aircraft since the Desert Fox missile attack in mid-December.

Allied pilots have retaliated with missiles, and the allies had not suffered any casualties nor lost any planes to date.

"Our first week of flying was affected by the weather. However, we have been able to fly approximately 50 sorties," reported Wackford in mid-February. The A-10 pilots have been performing their primary close air support, combat search and rescue, and forward air control missions.

The weather has been mild with highs in the mid-70s and lows in the 50s, explained Wackford who said it rained on Feb. 24.

"Most people are surprised with how chilly it gets in the desert this time of year," he reported. "In fact, we have people asking to get a second blanket for their beds."

Although the Air Guardmembers are eight or nine time zones from their American homes, they are hardly isolated from their loved ones.

"The e-mail and morale call programs are the best I've seen (during) five deployments," observed Air Force TSgt. Robert

Fortenberry, the 332nd Air Expeditionary Group's public affairs chief at the base.

"Granted, the pools are shut down and outdoor sports are at a drag, but the food is considered by many to be excellent," the base spokesman said.

"We have cable television everywhere, with some reliability," Fortenberry continued. "There's something going on every night at the recreation center; we have a very active chapel program; and the exchange isn't too bad, considering the conditions."

Typical of any military operation, living accommodations vary by rank.

Officers and some senior noncommissioned officers are living two to a room. Other NCOs are living in expandable shelters with five to a room. The others in the unit are living in 10-man tents.

Maryland pilots flew most of the Guard's A-10 missions during the first month. Air crews from Pennsylvania and then Connecticut will take on the missions in March and April.

The Guardmembers are also making their mark in other ways.

"The unit is attempting to leave the base better than when we arrived," Wackford related. "As a unit project we helped improve the Camel's Hump. We painted the interior and improved the lighting. We hope the improvements will make the club more inviting."

"One of our members, MSgt. Ernie Hancock, (a civil engineer), on his off day designed and built a covered walkway between the mobile kitchen trailer and the dining tent," Wackford added.

"With the weather we have been experiencing, it is these little improvements that make life here endurable."

## DOWN on DRUGS

A soldier with the California Army Guard's counter-drug program passes out literature warning of the perils of drug use to high schoolers visiting a light armored vehicle display recently. The effort was part of the state's Red Ribbon rally.



Photo courtesy of the California National Guard





## PEOPLE

• Celebrating Women's History Month

Ten California women pioneers are poised to make combat history

## Led by LADIES

By Maj. Stan Zezotarski  
California National Guard

The first woman to be a general officer in a combat unit could emerge from the California Army Guard's 40th Infantry Division, if any of that state's 10 lady pioneers continue to shatter conventional thinking.

According to Maj. Gen. Edmund Zisk, division commander, each woman is positioned for greater responsibility.

"I think that it's historic that a combat division has 10 female officers in battalion commands and key staff positions," he said. "Of the 10 active duty and eight Guard divisions, this one is unique for having that many women in key positions."

The women and their positions are as follows:

- Lt. Col. Nancy Cooper, 640th Military Intelligence Battalion commander.
- Lt. Col. Barbara Poole, 240th Support Battalion commander.
- Lt. Col. Charlotte Miller, 340th Support Battalion commander.
- Lt. Col. Diana Helsing, 240th Signal Battalion commander.
- Promotable Maj. Jane Marie Anderhold, 40th Infantry Detachment Rear Operations Center commander.
- Lt. Col. Dominic Archibald, 40th Support Battalion commander.
- Lt. Col. Sergine Humphreys, Division Provost Marshal.
- Lt. Col. Branch McClure, Division Personnel Officer.
- Lt. Col. Linda Harrel, Division



Photo by Lt. Col. Doug Hart

sion Staff Judge Advocate.

• Col. Dorcas Eaves, Division Surgeon.

Harrel and Eaves are believed to be the first women to serve as a Division's judge advocate and surgeon, respectively.

The ascension of these Golden State Guardswomen is especially telling given that nearly 93 percent of the 40th Infantry Division is male.

Women started making inroads into Army combat units nearly a decade ago thanks to a loophole in the Direct Combat Probability Coding or DCPC. That system had traditionally precluded women from serving in direct combat positions. However, it did not specify whether or not a woman could move forward from a brigade rear boundary to deliver supplies or fix equipment. It also did not limit how far a woman soldier could travel during a temporary excursion.

It was this vagueness that allowed many women in the active and reserve components to

prove their mettle during Desert Storm, and prompt then-Secretary of Defense Les Aspin to broaden a women's role in combat.

"I was a civilian law enforcement officer for 15 years," said Humphreys. "I've always had that kind of experience. In the MPs we're as close as we could get to combat."

Given combat's fluid nature, Helsing said the law makes sense.

"It allows me to provide the units the support they need to win on the battlefield," she said.

Although ground combat positions currently remain closed to women, the revised law opened promotion doors and opportunities for women to vie for posts occupied by colonels and generals.

The 40th's women are taking full advantage.

"I've been selected for the Army War College this fall, so I'm looking forward to putting a star on some day," Eaves said.

Zysk said he hopes to pin the

**LEADING LADIES** — Anderhold (left), Humphreys, Miller, Cooper, Zysk, Harrel, Helsing, McClure, Eaves and Poole (Archibald not pictured) make up the California Army Guard 40th Infantry Division's top 10 women.

division's first woman general.

"There's one brigadier general slot in each division called the assistant division commander for support, and it's open to women," he said. "It's my hope, that before I retire, one of these ladies will be an assistant division commander."

Serving as infantry soldiers is the secondary mission of all-combat support and combat service support soldiers, Zysk noted. They must be knowledgeable about, and skilled in, the survival techniques necessary to survive on the battlefield.

"Combat is serious business, so everyone who serves in it must be a combat leader and infantry soldier, regardless of whether they serve in direct combat units, combat support, or combat service support units," Zysk said. "I insist that all my leaders, regardless of gender,

meet the qualifications and demonstrate the leadership necessary to hold the position."

"These women earned their jobs," he added. "They realize that they must be prepared to fight as infantry soldiers, if necessary, and that they could risk being thrust into combat with little warning."

It's a possibility each of the division's women pioneers say they are ready to face.

"It's never crossed my mind that I'd be a battalion commander," said Lt. Col. Nancy Cooper. "Advancing to brigade commander or general officer does not occupy my thoughts."

"My main focus is to get the job done that I have right now," she noted, "and to prepare myself, and my subordinates, for any contingencies."

"I'll let my performance speak for itself."





**RABIES DROP** — Texas Army Guard Spc. Jorge Ramirez (right) and Mark Green load a conveyor system with gray fox bait (above) aboard a plane. The Guard helped drop more than 2.7 million rabies baits.



Photos by Sgt. Len Butler

Texas Army Guard spends a month helping neighbors fight coyotes, gray foxes

## Taking a BITE out of RABIES

By Sgt. Len Butler  
Texas National Guard

While friends and relatives were making and breaking resolutions, some members of the Texas Army Guard brought in the new year by joining the fight against rabies.

Working with the Texas Department of Health and the Texas Wildlife Damage Management Service, 20 Lone Star citizen-soldiers spent most of the month of January participating in the annual Oral Rabies Vaccination Program (ORVP).

The rabies virus has claimed at least four lives in Texas since 1990, and more than 2,500 people in the town of Fredericksburg have taken post-exposure vaccine injections.

Since 1995, the Texas Guard has been a key player in the fight against the outbreak of a particularly virulent strain of the disease that first appeared in South Texas in 1988 and quickly spread northward.

This year the program kicked off near Kingsville with a coyote bait drop Jan. 5, continuing with the gray fox portion of the campaign at Fort Stockton in western part of the state. The effort wound down in Fredericksburg Jan. 31.

Guardmembers helped drop more than

2.7 million rabies baits from three specially-equipped DeHaviland Twin Otter airplanes supplied by the Ontario (Canada) Ministry of Natural Resources. The fish meal-covered coyote baits resemble and are about one-third the size of a granola bar, and contain a wax pouch with liquid vaccine. The fox baits, bowing to the creatures' sweet tooth, are made of sugar-coated dog food with a vanilla-flavored vaccine pouch.

The baits — a tasty morsel for scavenging wild animals — have proven an effective way to immunize the coyotes and foxes. Since the beginning of the program, there has been a 97 percent decline in animal cases of canine rabies in South Texas. Since the operation moved to the western and central regions of the state in 1996, there has been an 88 percent decline in cases of gray fox rabies there.

This year, the baits were dropped in an area covering nearly 34,000 square miles in 48 Texas counties. It is the largest

rabies vaccination program of its kind in the world.

For the first time since 1995, all of the Guardmembers who started the program stayed for the entire length of the month-long mission.

"For me, this is an adventure," said Spc. Jorge Ramirez. "I'm getting to see parts of Texas that I probably would not ever see."

**"It's a valuable tool that not only reduces the threat to human life, but also the health care costs associated with the virus"**

**DR. M. GAYNE FEARNEYHOUGH**  
Director, Oral Vaccination Rabies Program

excellent job this year," Fearneyhough said. "The continuity was very valuable, and it was critical in stabilizing the crew assignments and the overall program. The Guard soldiers once again were a great asset."

Saidor "Hoppy" Turman of the U.S.

Department of Agriculture Wildlife Service said the National Guard is being counted on more than ever.

"Our jobs here are changing," Turman said. "The soldiers who have been working with us over the years have become more active in flights as well as the logistical operations."

Turman said what Texas has learned in dealing with its rabies problem can be applied to other states and countries.

"We could be making history," Turman said. "There are governments all over the world watching what we do."

A delegation from Mexico spent several days observing the South Texas leg of the program this year. And Robert Hale, a rabies control official from Ohio, also was on hand to observe the program as his state tries to find ways to contain an outbreak of rabies in raccoons.

Hale said the Ohio budget for rabies control is small compared to Texas' annual budget of \$4 million. And, in Ohio, much of the work is done on the local level using firefighters and police.

"Ohio could learn from Texas in its use of the National Guard," he said. "The agencies involved here are very team-oriented, very motivated and professional. I am impressed by that."

"This is what we have to strive for in Ohio if we are to put an end to our raccoon problem," Hale added.

The Texas outbreak was first detected in 1988, when two canine epizootics (epi-





Photo by Sgt. Len Butler

**RABIES RELIEF** — Texas Army Guard PFC Oscar Aguilar Jr. (inside airplane), PFC David Ortiz Jr. and Pvt. 2 Luis Alvarez (smiling) load rabies bait for a drop.

demies in the animal kingdom) were identified: a coyote strain in south Texas, and a gray fox strain in central and west Texas.

Both strains spread quickly over 69 counties.

The Health Department reacted with massive pet vaccinations in the affected areas. In addition, public awareness and education was stepped-up. Treatment also was made more widely available for individuals who suspected they had been infected. Then the response kicked into high gear with the first ORVP airdrop missions in 1995.

Guardmembers this year did everything but fly the airplanes. SSgt. Joel Saenz, a member of 3rd Battalion, 141st Infantry, and Maj. Ruben Alonzo of Task Force Texas, were even trained as navigators.

"A navigator watches the drop zones, operates the conveyor system, and keeps count of the rabies baits being dropped," explained Saenz, a native of La Jolla, Texas. "Navigators also maintain safety by watching for telephone and power lines."

Saenz said he had to learn how to read

flight plans to ensure the aircraft stayed on course.

The three bright yellow Canadian airplanes are specially-equipped with a conveyor system to deliver the baits one-by-one, each deploying out of a chute at the bottom of the plane's fuselage. To ensure accuracy, the airplanes maintain an altitude of a just 500 feet.

The low altitude made for some jolting flights. Airsickness also was a constant threat. But some light-hearted peer pressure by the Guardmembers was one way to handle sour stomachs.

"We kid around with the guys who come off the plane holding a (air-sickness) bag," said PFC David Ortiz Jr. "But everyone's been there."

Despite the threat of airsickness, Ortiz said he would like to come back next year.

"It's great seeing the military and civilians working together, having lots of fun, and it's all for a good purpose," he said. "I wish this could last a little longer."

As the program's director, Fearnely-hough said he expects the rabies mission to continue into the next century, stressing that the ultimate goal is to protect people.

"We have requested additional funding," he said. "We have a lot of support for the program. It's a valuable tool that not only reduces the threat to human life but, also the health care costs associated with the virus."

## IN THE NEWS

### Army seeking more recruits with GEDs

By Gary Sheftick  
Army News Service

**A**fter missing this fiscal year's first-quarter recruiting goal by 2,300 soldiers, the Army is taking a look at accepting more recruits with high school equivalency degrees.

"This notion that quality is defined by being a high school diploma graduate has put us in a box that is really hurting our ability to recruit," Secretary of the Army Louis Caldera said. The Army has many fine soldiers now with GEDs, Caldera added, explaining that young people with GEDs shouldn't be barred from military service if they can demonstrate the "desire and the ability to be successful."

Caldera has directed Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs Patrick Henry to develop a pilot program to look at recruits with GEDs.

That program is instead designed to provide benefits for the Army years into the future.

"The Army is committed to recruiting and maintaining a quality force," Henry said.

"Earning a GED should not preclude otherwise qualified and motivated young men and women from serving our nation in uniform," he added. "They have taken the initiative to earn a recognized high school equivalency, and that initiative can translate into success in the Army."

A small task force under Henry is trying to isolate attributes, qualifications and skills that will identify those potential recruits with GEDs who are most likely to be successful in the Army, an official said. Life experience such as jobs, scouting and volunteer work may be taken into account, he added, to see if these play a factor in one's potential for retention.

The task force may also look at other research, he said, such as a study being conducted now by the Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences.

ARI developed a test to measure motivation among recruits. Called the Assessment of Individual Motivation, or AIM, the test has been administered to about 20,000 recruits so far. About 2,000 of these recruits have GEDs.

Under a current Department of Defense policy, no more than 10 percent of recruits can be GED holders. Officials said if the Army wants to accept more than 10 percent, Caldera would request relief from DoD regulatory restrictions.

Last month, recruiting more GED holders was a topic of discussion at the Army's first Hispanic Leadership Summit held recently in San Antonio, Texas.

Participants at the summit included Texas Congressmen Ciro Rodriguez and Charlie Gonzalez, and Gil Coronado, director of the Selective Service System. Coronado dropped out of school at age 15 and joined the military. He later went on to receive a GED and retired from the service as a colonel.

"The military opened more doors in my life than I ever thought existed," Coronado said.

Rodriguez, who represents the San Antonio district, said that research has identified seven reasons why students drop out of high school. "One of those is academic," Rodriguez said. "The other six are not."

Rodriguez said that many Hispanic students drop out of high school to help support their families.

"I think that the Army is an institution that should not write off people in America who need a second chance," Caldera said.

A number of the Army's top NCOs have been GED holders, according to Army personnel officials, including two former sergeant majors of the Army.

Medal of Honor recipient Louis Rocco also had a GED.

As a sergeant first class, Rocco earned the Medal of Honor in Vietnam in 1970 for carrying eight injured soldiers across 20 meters of exposed terrain under fire. He did this despite having a broken wrist, fractured hip and severely burned hands suffered moments earlier when his helicopter was shot down on the way to pick up the wounded.

"You don't have to have a diploma to perform an act of valor," Rocco said.

**"You don't have to have a diploma to perform an act of valor"**

LOUIS ROCCO  
Medal of Honor recipient



After serving in Honduras, Benjie Rikard has a new perspective on education

## Hard lesson LEARNED

By SSgt. Mary Anna Lancaster  
South Carolina National Guard

Serving as a school district board member for a South Carolina county for 16 years has certainly given John Benjamin "Benjie" Rikard a good idea of what it takes to build a school.

He now has a new perspective on building them.

Rikard spent two weeks in February helping construct a cement block school in Honduras as a member of the South Carolina Army National Guard. The staff sergeant with the 122nd Engineer Battalion's Company B from Batesburg-Leesville has spent 35 of his 54 years in the National Guard.

That battalion spent the last two weeks in February building a three-room school in the village of el Porvenir del Norte that was devastated last fall by Hurricane Mitch. When finished, the school will feature indoor plumbing and plenty of windows.

After two weeks of laboring in the hot Honduran sun, Rikard has concluded that building a school in a Latin American country is different from building one in the United States.

"In the states you have to have licensed and bonded contractors to build a school," he noted. "In Honduras, our National Guard troops included civilian engineers, folks who work in chicken factories, a truck driver and even a night club bouncer."

There were other differences. "All bids (in the states) have to go before the state board for approval," said Rikard who has been involved with three school construction projects totaling \$18.4 million for Lexington County's District 3. "Once the state board approves it, the

state department has to approve it. Sometimes we have to make changes."

Rikard said his board also seeks the involvement of the community when they're building a school that will serve the nearly 2,500 students it educates.

"We try to find out what they would like to have in the schools," he explained. "We tell them how much money we have for the project and we work from that standpoint. The blueprint is drawn up to American standards."

"The specifications for building (in Honduras) are not like what we have in the states," he added.

Back home in Lexington Rikard is a quality control mechanic for a tire company. He also owns a plumbing and electrical business.

"Here, concrete blocks can vary in size. We have to adapt and make it come out right. We try to make it work, make it safe and create a good, quality product," he added.

Benjie Rikard has discovered another difference between education in the U.S. and in Honduras.

His three daughters, Robbin, Heidi and Laura, have furthered their education



Photo by MSgt. Bob Haskell

**GETTING SCHOOLED** — School district board member SSgt. Benjie Rikard noted the alarming differences in educational opportunities for American and Honduran children.

thanks to five South Carolina National Guard Association scholarships in a country that puts a premium on higher learning.

In Honduras, small children cannot go to school unless they have such basic necessities as a pair of shoes, a pencil and a pad of paper. This prompted Rikard's hometown of Batesburg-Leesville to collect pencils and pads donated by area stores for the new schools. His school district is providing desks.

Combined with the cement blocks that National Guardmembers like Rikard are laying in Honduras, children from that Central American now have something in common with their neighbors from the north — a chance for a richer future.

A one-page letter to President Jimmy Carter helped Colleen Hickman realize her dream

## Approved BY THE President

By MSgt. Bob Haskell  
National Guard Bureau

Colleen Hickman of Sulphur, Okla., was 36 on that day in 1980 when her son said one of his junior high school teachers had suggested that serving in the United States Army was not a good idea.

That did not set well with Colleen's firefighter husband who had done his bit during four years in the Air Force.

Why, young Hickman pressed, should men feel the need to join the military and not women?

Mom decided it was time to put up or shut up.

"We tried to always prove to our children that you do what's right. I was just trying to prove a point," said Mrs. Hickman who was a registered nurse and who offered her services to the Army, the Navy and the Air Force. No one seemed to be interested.

So that May she wrote to the President of the United States. She asked President Jimmy Carter in a single-page letter why she could not sign up.

That got results. First she got a call from the Pentagon assuring her that her medical skills could indeed be utilized. Then she got a call from the Oklahoma Army National Guard. On July 9 she was sworn in as an Army Guard second lieutenant in the Medical Corps.

"I didn't know the National Guard had any nursing slots," explained the

mother of two who has since discovered how military service can expand one's horizons.

She has been an Army Guard nurse in Japan. She earned her flight nurse wings during two years in the Air Guard. She volunteered for three years of active Army duty in 1990, just in time to experience the anticipation and preparations for the Persian Gulf War.

And this February, Maj. Colleen Hickman flew to northern Honduras. On Valentine's Day she assumed the duties as chief nurse for a 14-member Army Guard medical team from Oklahoma that spent two weeks staffing the clinic for a Joint Task Force Sula rotation of 400 National Guard and Reserve troops.

That is one of a half-dozen New Horizons 99 task forces being sent to Honduras, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic this year to help Central American people rebuild from last year's devastating hurricanes Georges and Mitch.

The JTF Sula base camp is a gritty tent town that has been built on a cattle ranch beside the city of El Progreso, 30 miles from the Caribbean Sea. Heat ailments, dehydration, malaria and injuries to people working on heavy construction projects were among the primary concerns for

the clinical staff led by Lt. Col. Phillip Nokes, an assistant professor of family practice at Oklahoma State University.

Fellow Oklahoman Maj. Gary Adams, a junior high school teacher and coach, is the medical officer for the task force that will remain in El Progreso through May.

At 55, Hickman has the caring eyes, the closely cropped hair and the seasoned hands of a veteran nurse. She is a community nurse who drives some 1,200 miles each month caring for patients across Murray and Carter counties near her southern Oklahoma home.

The Fort Huachuca hospital in southern Arizona was her Army duty station in 1990 when the winds of the Gulf War began blowing across this land. That hospital, she explained, was prepared for a lot of wounded soldiers who would need long-term care.

She was also told to be ready to ship out for the Persian Gulf with the second wave of troops. That call never came because the February 1991 ground war against Iraq lasted just 100 hours and produced far fewer casualties than anyone thought possible. U.S. dead and wounded totaled 766 from a force of 467,939.

"I really felt let down because I

**PRESIDENTIALLY APPROVED** Maj. Colleen Hickman, the chief nurse for a 14-member Army Guard medical team serving Joint Task Force Sula in Honduras, gazes upon a base camp built on a cattle ranch beside the city of El Progreso.

didn't get to go," Hickman acknowledged. "But I was also relieved that so few of our soldiers were killed and wounded."

She was also relieved that her daughter, Carla, came through six months of Desert Storm duty in Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Kuwait unscathed. Carla saw the Gulf with an Oklahoma Army Guard transportation unit.

As for Maj. Hickman, 19 years after refusing to be put off because the military didn't want her, she found herself on another kind of front line. She helped care for U.S. citizen-soldiers and airmen who were building schools and clinics for their bent but not broken Central American cousins.

"It means so much to me to be able to help people while I'm wearing this uniform," Hickman related.

All it took was a letter to the president.

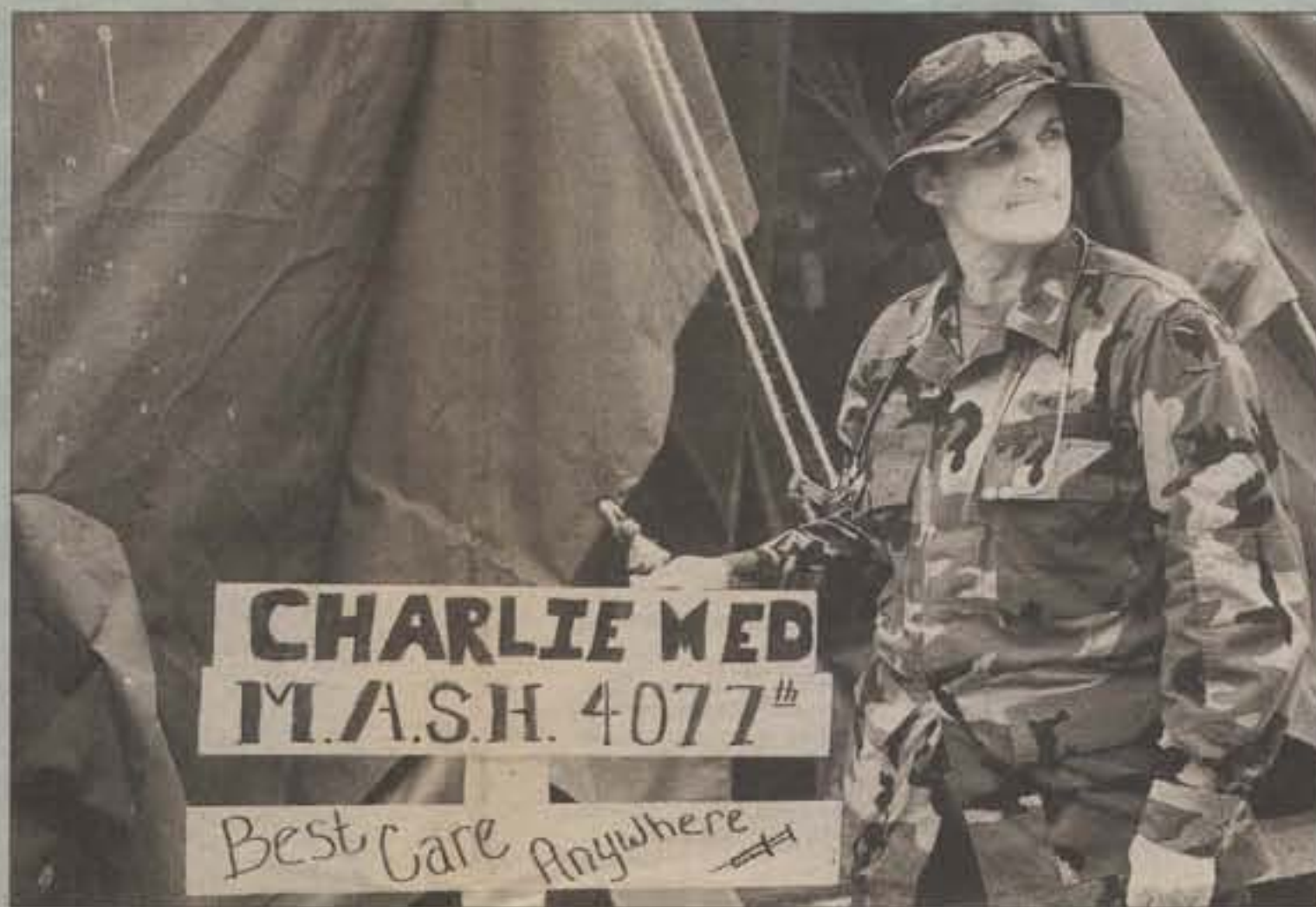


Photo by MSgt. Bob Haskell



Photo by MSgt. Bob Haskell

## LINKING with LOVED ONES

By SSgt. Mary Anna Lancaster  
South Carolina National Guard

Coconut palms swaying in a gentle breeze to a melodic beat of exotic birds could give the illusion of a tropical vacation in northern Honduras. However, the incessant hum of generators interrupted by the frequent thunder of helicopters helped snap many back to reality.

Reality, and heavy doses of it, was easy to find for 400 U.S. National Guard and Reserve troops helping the Central American nation to rebuild after last fall's Hurricane Mitch.

Ankle-deep mud that turned a trip to the shower tent into an obstacle course greeted troops when it rained. Combine that with the dust-eating conditions created when the sun came out, and any illusions of paradise were quickly shattered for those supporting Joint Task Force Sula thousands of miles from their homes.

Enter South Carolina Army Guard Capt. Richard Bolan.

The task force's electronic and communications officer is trying to bring a little bit of home to the total of 2,700 troops who will spend two-week rotations at the Sula base camp on a cattle ranch near El Progreso through May.

He is their e-mail man.

A member of the Palmetto State's 111th Signal Battalion in Greenwood, Bolan is tasked with ensuring that the camp keep in touch with the rest of the world by transmitting and receiving messages through communications satellites.

That includes a personal e-mail message service that Bolan began on his own. Electronic mail, Bolan knows, has become the high-tech communications tool of the 1990s.

"Last September, during the planning for this exercise, one of my personal objectives was to figure out how to provide e-mail services for Morale, Welfare,

**PLAYING CUPID** — South Carolina Capt. Richard Bolan devised a way for deployed troops to talk to loved ones in the states.

and Recreation," Bolan explained.

"Once on the ground, I figured out how to provide those capabilities," he added. Bolan set up shop in Honduras in January.

Armed with a digital camera, placed outside the MWR tent, Bolan devised a way for troops to talk directly to loved ones back home. Surprisingly, he reported, the offer to transmit e-mail messages with digital pictures didn't catch on initially.

That all changed in February when the enterprising captain took several pictures of a female medic for a bulletin board poster that read, "Valentine's Special — E-mail your photo to a loved one."

Later, a cook working the night shift woke up Bolan to see if he could sling Cupid's arrow electronically. Shortly thereafter, Bolan reported, the service took off like wild fire.

"I would take their picture, write their e-mail message and send it to a 'bucket' in the computer so that when I logged on, it would automatically send," he said.

"Originally, I sent 23 digital pictures and e-mails to soldiers' homes," Bolan added.

With one small problem. Many of the subsequent replies from loved ones in the states failed to include the name of the soldier it was intended.

"I had quite a time trying to locate those soldiers," Bolan recalled. "I had to pull the pictures up on screen and connect each to a name."

"To remedy that problem," he added, "I started putting messages on each e-mail asking the senders to include the full name of the soldiers."

Gradually, Bolan noted, "word spread like peanut butter."

"I had lines of people standing outside the tent wanting to send e-mail home," he said, "especially with the digital pictures."

Within 10 days, he reported, he had sent about 75 e-mails with pictures.

Although his primary mission is to advise the task force commander about the capabilities of the electronic communications equipment, Bolan has now become a link to loved ones back home.





**DIRE NEED** — A 4-year-old girl suffering from malnutrition and tuberculosis rallied many Guardmembers.



Photos by MSgt. Bob Haskell

# HELPING HONDURAS

FROM PAGE 1

the largest group among the task force's 400 military workers focusing on six projects during the first two-week rotation.

Fifty Air Force Reserve civil engineers from Ohio and Louisiana had already dug two water wells and were building a school. Other Guard soldiers came from Alabama, Oklahoma, New York and Tennessee. Seventy Honduran infantry and engineer troops were also engaged.

"We are here for nation building," said Spears. "The United States needs our help, and the South Carolina Army National Guard fits perfectly into the picture. Because of downsizing, the Army has had to call on the Guard so much more than in the past. It has worked out well for us to take on this project."

Three two-room clinics, four three-room schools and three water wells in the northern region became the focus of the task force in mid-February as the winter rains gave way to another blistering Central American summer.

Two units that rotated earlier built the tent-city base camp on a cattle farm five miles north of the Sula River Valley city of El Progreso.

A total of 2,700 Guard and Reserve troops will spend two-week rotations working the projects, providing basic medical and dental aid to Honduran people, feeding troops and maintaining a fleet of 300 vehicles through May.

It is the tip of the New Horizons 99 iceberg that has grown in size since hur-

ricanes Georges and Mitch ripped up parts of Latin America and killed over 11,000 people last fall. Congress approved an additional \$56 million for the additional work in early January.

Initially, for example, the Army Guard was tasked to direct a single task force and 2,500 Guard soldiers were scheduled for Honduras duty during the first half of this year.

That number quickly escalated to 10,000 destined for duty in a half-dozen task forces in the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua as well as Honduras. The timetable has been extended to August.

The National Guard is directing three of the five additional task forces that will also employ troops from most of the United States' reserve forces.

Furthermore, the Guard's task force originally scheduled for the western Lempira region of Honduras was redirected to the northern Sula Valley within a month because of Hurricane Mitch's fatal impact that wiped out entire villages and turned thriving banana plantations into endless acres of mud.

A lot of people are watching.

"I believe you are doing a great thing here in Honduras," Gen. Dennis Reimer, the Army's chief of staff, told members of the South Carolina Army Guard's 122nd Engineer Battalion during a visit on Feb. 16, their first week on the job.

The year's additional task forces will focus on rebuilding roads and bridges wiped out by the hurricanes' floods and mudslides.

Sula's emphasis is on schools and clinics for Honduran people who needed help before Mitch hit the region last Oct. 29.

Two clinics that will serve a total of 5,300 people living in 14 villages outside of El Progreso were between a quarter



**BUILDING A FUTURE** — South Carolina Spc. Leonard Freeman (above) places a cinder block. SSgt. Michael Burgess (right) works with an Honduran Army soldier to build a medical clinic.

lems are the scourges of the Honduran people, said Reyer.

The single public clinic and a 70-bed hospital in El Progreso are already overwhelmed by the medical demands of that city's 98,000 people, she added while escorting Guard representatives through those facilities.

A 4-year-old girl named Norma, suffering from malnutrition and tuberculosis, who sat in a crib and stared blankly at her visitors helped punctuate the doctor's point.

Norma is one reason why the South Carolina troops have adopted the motto "mission plus."

"It means going way beyond the call of duty," explained Lt. Col. Steven Vinson, commander of the Edgefield-based battalion that is providing three rotations for the task force. The members of Company B from Batesburg-Leesville led the way.

Those Guard soldiers have collected tons of medical supplies from hospitals back home for the new clinics in Honduras. They have obtained shoes, pens, paper, desks and computers for the new schools. The Louisiana Air National Guard flew more than two tons of those supplies to Honduras aboard a C-130 with the Spears delegation in time for the opening ceremonies.

Guardmembers have also arranged for water purification units to be sent to Honduran towns.

"Mission plus" means you don't work with just your head and your hands," Vinson explained. "You work with your heart."



**WIPED OUT** — Carolina engineers scoop dirt in a gravel pit where a small village once existed.

and half completed before the opening ceremonies. Both projects were ahead of schedule.

"We're ahead of schedule, and there's no reason why we can't keep up this pace as long as the weather cooperates," said Mississippi Army Guard Lt. Col. Ronald Lassiter, the task force commander.

"I am really proud that the Americans are coming into this area and building these clinics," said Dr. Maria Elena Reyer, the area's chief medical officer for the past three years.

The highest rate of AIDS in Central America, severe respiratory infections, malaria, diarrhea and orthopedic prob-



## Buckeye contingent deploys to Lackland to get refreshed on Air Force basic training

By SSgt. Shannon Scherer  
Ohio National Guard

The horror stories associated with basic training about tough drill sergeants, grueling mental and physical conditioning and homesickness are numerous and well documented.

However, for 33 Ohio Air Guard members going back to basic training meant reflecting on a vivid past and learning about the present.

Members from each of Ohio's flying and ground units deployed recently to Lackland AFB, Texas — home of Air Force basic training. A Buckeye contingent has made the trip every few years since the early 1990s to ensure its members are kept up-to-date on the changes at Lackland.

This year's group included recruiters and retention managers, commanders and training specialists.

"There's a lot of support from the units for our strength management team," said Larry Mallett, recruiting and retention superintendent. "The state staff really saw the need for this and they made it happen."

On the first day at Lackland, the Ohio Guard men and women were given a tour of the obstacle course. Basic trainees are expected to run it twice during their six-week stay.

"We want all the trainees to attempt the course," said SSgt. James Rabel, a training instructor. "We no longer



Photo by SSgt. Shannon Scherer

# Back to BASIC

do a timed-run for safety purposes.

"Now, we encourage a teamwork-type atmosphere," he added. "Before it was more of an individual activity."

The tour moved on to Lackland's new security forces training facility, where the group learned about the electronics careers offered at the technical school.

The next day focused on a new change to Air Force basic training known as "Warrior Week," where trainees spend time in the field. After trainees spend an afternoon at the firing range, they proceed to a remote location. Armed with modified M-16s, the trainees set up tents, don MOPP gear and patrol a perimeter for 72 hours. In

**KNOWING THE DRILL** -- Ohio CMSgt. James Mock (right) and Col. Myron Ashcraft discuss changes in basic training with drill sergeant (SSgt.) James Rabel.

September, informed Rabel, this exercise will extend to one full week.

"We're trying to get combat training in them," he noted, "teach them how to live in field conditions."

The group got a first-hand look at a dormitory. The dorm tour, replete with buffed to perfection, bed-aligned floors, prompted several in the Ohio group to reflect on their days as basic trainees.

For lunch, the Ohioans were paired with trainees to hear their accounts on basic training. Once the initial formalities were exchanged, the trainees relaxed to share their observations. After lunch the group met with four soon-to-be Ohio National Guard airmen and women.

"It's really hard," said Kristen Shade, a trainee from the 179th Airlift Wing in Mansfield. "Especially when your flight hasn't learned to work as a team yet."

Other Ohio trainees talked to the group about their expected career fields and what they thought of such basic training additions as the field exercise and the new confidence course. For the most part, all agreed that they were ready to go home.

Overall, the visit produced many memories and good information.

"It's important that we give people an updated view of the new concepts at basic training," Mallett said. "Recruiters need to be able to paint an actual picture for the enlistee."

## CORONET OAK

FROM  
PAGE 3

Panama supporting Volant Oak -- to rescue Lawrence Pezzullo, U.S. Ambassador to Nicaragua. The Volunteer State crew whisked the ambassador and his party from Managua's airport just hours before the country fell to the Marxist Sandinistas.

Recalled Air National Guard Historian, Dr. Charles J. Gross, the aircraft landed without clearance and taxied across grass runway medians to pick up the ambassador and his family. This mission was the basis for the made-for-television movie, *Last Plane Out*, starring Jan Michael Vincent.

Although the official end of the Coronet Oak mission may not be until June 1, many who came to the farewell ceremony reflected on past missions.

Sitting around a table, several subdued crewman with Wyoming's 153rd Airlift Wing, shared history.

"I've been here 15 or 16 times," said CMSgt. Thomas Steinbach. "It was

always great to go TDY here. You got to see so many different countries."

SMSgt. Tony Melendez, also a member of the Cheyenne-based unit, agreed.

"I've been coming here since 1978," he recalled. "There has been a lot of modernization since then. The billeting is better, the facilities are better. And you used to have to be much more aware of your surroundings."

Since the ouster nearly 10 years ago of Panama's long-time dictator, Manuel Noriega, the country has developed.

Lt. Col. Roy Thompson, the 153rd's chief of safety, praised the mission for its realistic training opportunities.

"Humanitarian is the biggest word on the whole mission," he said. "If boats capsized, we would airdrop pararescuemen. It was always exciting and real world training. It was the best training for our maintenance people and aircrews."

"I think we need to have a presence here," he added.

Where that presence will be has not yet been decided. But, according to Lt. Col. Tom Hulsey, the Guard advisor to the Air Mobility Command's director of operations who commanded the operation for eight months last year, it will be difficult to perform a similar mission from another location.



Photo by Lt. Col. Jean Marie Beall

"The support and 'mother ship' has been here so many years," Hulsey observed. "We have the facilities and everything we need to run an operation. You move someplace else and you won't have that."

Hulsey said one of the biggest changes he has witnessed since flying his first mission in 1977 has been the return of the Canal Zone to the Panamanians.

"That (returning the canal) has been

**PATH to PANAMA** -- With Coronet Oak's end, Maryland Capt. Gorgon Kinney, a 175th Wing navigator, will have to chart a course elsewhere.

all for the best," he insisted. "We have had a good relationship with the Panamanian people. The history is incredible. I'm going to miss it."

For some, like Maryland crew chief SSgt. Joseph Casal, a former member of the New York Air Guard's 106th Air Rescue Wing, it was his first and last Coronet Oak mission.

"What a wonderful and historic country," said the 21-year Guard veteran. "I'm sorry to see us leave this place."

TSgt. Steve Harris, a crew chief with the Georgia Air Guard's 165th Airlift Wing, was on the flightline getting his unit's C-130 ready to fly one of the last rotations out of Howard.

"We've been real busy," Harris said. "Our unit has flown relief missions to Honduras (in response to Hurricane Mitch) and Colombia (the recent earthquake)."

Amid the roar of Air Guard aircraft, Harris summed up the feelings of many who have supported Coronet Oak's humanitarian efforts.

"I'm going to miss it," he said.



## NEWS

## MAKERS

Compiled by MSgt. John Malthaner  
National Guard Bureau

Topeka-area leaders received a one-on-one introduction to the Kansas Air Guard 190th Air Refueling Wing's STARBASE program recently, thanks to a special conference held by the capital city's mayor, Joan Wagnon.

STARBASE (Science and Technology Academics Reinforcing Basic Aviation and Space Exploration) is an educational program run from various Air Guard bases to spur interest in math and science for 4th, 5th and 6th graders. The program is fully funded by the National Guard Bureau.

The mayor, a former math and science teacher, said she was hooked on STARBASE the first time she saw it.

"It took me about 30 seconds of getting in that classroom and seeing those children at the flight simulator just having the time of their lives learning, painlessly, wonderful math and science principles," Wagnon recalled.

STARBASE pupils learned from 190th pilots, mechanics, security police and others about the fundamentals of math and science through hands-on experiments and projects.

Since it's began in 1993, Kansas STARBASE has impacted more than 31,000 students and 411 teachers in Topeka and Wichita, and most recently Salina. The Sunflower State Guard's program — there are 13 others — is the largest in the country.

The Texas Army Guard recently hosted a special Dining Out for World War II veterans to recognize the accomplishment of the state's storied 36th Infantry Division.

Members of Headquarters, 3rd Brigade, 49th Armored Division hosted the event.

"Texans owe much to the veterans of the 36th Infantry Division," insisted Col. Thomas Roman, 3rd Brigade commander. "The Dining-out was a small way to honor the gallant soldiers and patriots that served our country."

The keynote speaker for the event was World War II veteran, Gordon Rose, 75. In 1939, and at the young age of 16, Rose misrepresented his age to join Company K, 143rd Infantry Regiment. He was mobilized with the "Fighting 36th" in 1940 that later took part in the Salerno invasion and the battle of Altaville. After he personally captured 11 German soldiers, helped to hold the town and organized the evacuation of the unit, Rose was awarded the Bronze Star.

Roman said exposing current-day Guardsmembers to those before them is important.

"I hope events like this will inbed a sense of tradition and pride into our young soldiers as we pay homage to other National Guard heroes of our past."

"As our soldiers begin deployment to Bosnia in the near future with the 49th Armored Division," Roman added. "It is important that they remember their heritage."

The Division has been selected to deploy to Bosnia this summer as the command and control unit responsible for the withdrawal of the United Nations forces currently maintaining the peace in the Balkans.



Topeka Mayor Joan Wagnon champions Kansas STARBASE.



Texas Army Guard honors its 36th Infantry Division.



Pennsylvania refuelers embraced 'Year of the Enlisted.'

Five New Mexico Army Guard helicopter crewmembers who rescued a downed Air Force F-16 pilot last year received the prestigious "Igor I. Sikorsky Helicopter Rescue Award" recently.

Capt. John Fishburn, CWO Mike Rieske, SFC Henry DeHerrera, SFC Mike Flores and Sgt. Paul Herrera — all members of the Santa Fe-based 717th Medical Company — were credited for saving the life of Air Force Maj. Kevin Frisbie last September. The unit flies the Sikorsky UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter.

Frisbie, a senior pilot assigned to the 27th Fighter Wing at nearby Cannon AFB, experienced a malfunction in his gravity suit during a training mission and blacked out. The pilot regained consciousness only to discover his F-16 Falcon was heading right into the ground. He ejected just before it crashed near Fort Sumner.

The Blackhawk crew found the injured pilot — he suffered multiple compound fractures — and airlifted him to University Hospital's trauma center in Albuquerque.

Doctors there insisted Frisbie would have died from loss of blood had the National Guard aviators not responded so quickly.

The Pennsylvania Air Guard's 171st Air Refueling Wing in Pittsburgh recently held its "Year of the Enlisted Forces" inauguration.

Keystone State Brig. Gen. William Boardley, TSgt. Rosalind Ramos Alvarez and A1C Michael Jesse launched the effort by decorating one of the unit's KC-135s with this year's theme logo.

According to CMSgt. Ross Hamer, the unit is doing more than just decorating aircraft.

- Commemorative "Year of the Enlisted Forces" coins will be distributed.
- Mid-morning teas with the wing commander are scheduled for E-6s and below.
- A "Chiefs Award" will be created to recognize airmen and women that go beyond the call of duty.
- The Outstanding Airman, NCO and Senior NCO will receive a plaque, parking space and a pair of tickets to the base's annual dining out.

New York Air Guard TSgt. Bill Pullar, an engineering technician with the 105th Airlift Wing's Civil Engineering Squadron, was recently awarded the "1998 Society of American Military Engineers (SAME) Goddard Medal."

The "SAME Goddard Medal" is awarded annually to Air Force and Air Guard enlisted members to recognize outstanding contributions to military engineering.

Pullar, a part-time Guardsman with the Newburgh-based unit and a full time engineer with the New York Department of Transportation (DOT), was recognized for designing a storage facility in Alaska.

"The feedback from the site manager there was that his work was phenomenal," reported Maj. Tom Stanley, the 105th's assistant base engineer. "Civil engineers are now constructing the building that Bill designed and to his requirements."

"He's one of the best site developers I've ever worked with," he added.



Ohio Sgt. Mike Conner will always remember the floods. So will those he saved.

# Savior of the STORM

By TSgt. Lori King  
Ohio National Guard

It was only an hour into the birthday party when the storm hit. Sgt. Mike Conner said the wind blew so hard that rain came down sideways, like it wasn't even touching the ground. It blew smack into the side of his parents' house. In less than an hour he stood in water up to his knees.

The birthday party for his son and daughter was cut short when rain water began to fill his parent's basement and tornado warnings were reported on the radio.

Conner, 30, the father of three young children, decided they would stay the night with his parents, so he left two of his kids at his parents' home in Byesville, Ohio, and headed back with his youngest child to his home in Caldwell — 13 miles away — to gather clothes.

During that trek home he drove through water that submerged the interstate. That's when he knew he wasn't returning to his parents' place — driving in the storm was too much. So he stayed at home and listened to his scanner.

By this time it was 1 a.m. He heard on the police scanner that kids were trapped on top of a truck that was about to be swept away by flood waters.



Photo by TSgt. Lori King

Heavy rains all night long had forced water to escape from the nearby banks of Duck Creek and fill the streets of Caldwell. A strong current was sweeping up cars and trucks like they were toys.

Since Conner, a team leader with the Ohio Army Guard's 2nd Battalion, 174th Air Defense Artillery, lived only a minute from the scene, he threw on his military uniform and went to the rescue. What he found was a woman trapped inside of her car in front of a grocery store.

"She was begging for someone to come and get her," Conner recalled. "The light was on in her car and she was in it, panicked and scared. I took off running past the deputy. I didn't have a clue how fast or deep the water was.

"I pulled her up and out of her car, which was moving, and carried her through the current back to dry ground," he continued. "As soon as I turned around, the car was gone."

"I was thinking with my heart instead

of my head," he admitted.

For the next hour he helped the local police pull stranded people to safety. That was when he spotted a man and his dog inside of a truck that was being swept sideways into a store parking lot covered with water.

"The dog jumped out of the window and the man went after him, but he couldn't swim," he said.

Instead of stepping onto Route 78, Conner said the man turned the wrong direction and fell right into the immersed lot.

Conner took off after him.

"The water was over my head, over six feet," he explained. "I was exhausted, and the man was extremely heavy. I was hoping both of us had enough steam to go a few more feet, but I was able to pull him straight up to the road."

And the dog? Conner saved it, too.

Conner ended up spending 17 continuous hours in the water searching for miss-

**CONNER'S CROSS** — Ohio Army Guard Sgt. Mike Conner was recently presented the Ohio Cross, the state's highest military honor.

ing people and recovering bodies.

He shrugs off his heroic efforts, saying he was just "a friend helping friends find friends."

Because of his bravery, only four, not six, area residents died that night. Conner spent his next 21 days as part of a large Guard force brought in to help Noble County residents recover from the flood.

He drove around some of the most remote areas of the county in his five-ton truck delivering potable water, food and personal hygiene items. Nearly every day he transported nurses who administered tetanus shots to anyone who wanted one. He also drove out-of-town folks through flooded county roads so they could reach their elderly family members.

1st Sgt. Jack Sloter wasn't surprised when he heard that his anti-aircraft crew chief had risked his life that first night.

"More lives would have been lost if not for soldiers like Sergeant Conner," he asserted. "He deserves the Ohio Cross."

And he got it.

Conner received a letter from then-Ohio Gov. George Voinovich stating he had heard about the flood incident and that then-Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Richard Alexander put him in for the Ohio Cross, the state's highest military honor.

The Ohio Cross is issued by the state when acts of extreme bravery and risk of life are involved. Alexander presented Conner the commendation and medal at a recent ceremony at his unit's armory in McConnelsville.

Conner said the attention was nice, but unnecessary.

"Basically, this is all a part of the oath that I swore when I enlisted," he said matter-of-factly. "It's just a part of it."

"But my family's ecstatic," he added, "and so is my unit — if not more."

## GOOD ORDER

FROM PAGE 3

modern military missions.

The policy immediately prohibits officers and enlisted soldiers from beginning any new romantic relationship. However, if the relationship existed prior to March 1, officials said the soldiers have until March 1, 2000 to get married, break up or face the consequences.

The policy also prohibits relationships between permanent-party soldiers and initial-entry trainees, whether stationed on the same post or not. It prohibits romantic relationships between recruiters and potential recruits, without regard to where the applicants live or where the service member is stationed.

In fact, the new policy prohibits any relation-

ship between soldiers of different ranks if the relationship appears to compromise supervisory authority, or could result in impartial treatment. Relationships are prohibited if they appear to involve the improper use of rank or position for personal gain. Relationships are also forbidden if they will have an adverse impact on unit morale or the ability of a

**"Good, professional leadership and common sense will make these new policies work"**

**PATRICK HENRY**  
Assistant Secretary of the Army  
for Manpower and Reserve Affairs

command to accomplish its mission.

The new policy also gives commanders at company-level the authority to prohibit relationships that compromise or appear to compromise the integrity of authority or the chain of command.

Officials said the new policy is not intended to preclude normal team building, such as community organizations, family gatherings, unit-based social functions or athletic competition.

"I want to stress that the Army has always emphasized the importance of sound professional interpersonal relationships to the success of Army missions," Henry said. "The nature and structure of our Army demands that officers and enlisted work together in teams and units under trying circumstances. Unit cohesion is essential to build the confidence and trust necessary for units to fight and win on the battlefield."

"Good, professional leadership and common sense will make these new policies work for the good of the Army," he added.





# STATES

• Forging to France • Sooner Squadron • Hydrological Heroes

## ALASKA

Members of the 168th Air Refueling Wing recently returned from a deployment to Istres, France in support of Operation Deliberate Forge.

More than 175 airmen and women from a variety of job specialties with the Eielson AFB-based unit were part of a force that provided surveillance and air refueling support over Bosnia.

## OKLAHOMA

The 205th Engineering Installation Squadron recently completed two combined projects on Aviano Air Base, Italy.

One of the projects included the relocation of one AN/GPN-20 airport surveillance radar. This radar supports air surveillance and guidance to aircraft within a 30 nautical mile radius of Aviano Air Base.

205th engineers also installed approximately 60,000 feet of cable to support the radar.

Brig. Gen. Timothy Peppe, the commander of the 31st Fighter Wing at Aviano, was mindful of the Sooners' effort.

"The 205th EIS has worked tirelessly on critical communications projects for the development of Aviano," he wrote.

The 205th, officials estimated, saved the Italian base nearly \$100,000.

## PENNSYLVANIA

### BUCKET BRIGADE

A Keystone State Army Guard Chinook helicopter flown by members of Company G, 104th Aviation at Fort Indiantown Gap scoops up a 2,000 gallon bucket of water to drop on raging wildfires. In all, 104th crews dropped 54 buckets of water, containing 104,000 gallons, on a remote terrain in the central part of the state.



Photo by Lt. Col. John Maletta

## OHIO

Maj. Gen. John H. Smith was recently named the Buckeye State's 79th adjutant general.

He replaced Maj. Gen. Richard Alexander, who retired Dec. 31 after serving 11 years in the post.

Alexander currently is the executive director of the National Guard Association of the United States in Washington D.C.

"I'm honored that Governor Taft has selected me to be a member of his cabinet," said Smith, a 37-year military veteran.

Smith will command the state's 15,000 Army and Air Guard members. He is the first Air Guard officer to serve in the post.

The general volunteered for service in the U.S. Air Force and received his commission as a second lieutenant in 1962.

He served a one-year tour of duty in Vietnam as a C-123 aircraft navigator, where his valor earned him the Distinguished Flying Cross with one oak leaf cluster, the Air Medal with fifteen oak leaf clusters and the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm.

Following Vietnam, Smith served in a variety of Air Force assignments and piloted the F-100, F-102 and F-4 fighters prior to joining the Iowa Air Guard in 1974.

He joined the Buckeye Guard two years later.

He was the state's assistant AG for Air before his current selection.

## SOUTH CAROLINA

After a hurricane struck the small mill town of Lockhart, members of the Palmetto State Army Guard's 266th and 267th Quartermaster Detachments were called upon to help after the town lost its water supply.

"The system ran completely out of water, the pipes, everything was just dry," reported town administrator Rick Martin. "It was a disaster."

The Department of Health and Environmental Control issued a rare "imminent health threat."

The Allendale-based Guardmembers were dispatched to nearby Broad River to pump water through their three Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Units. The Hydrological heroes purified an average of 40,000 gallons a day for Lockhart's nearly 800 residents.

"We've got a sparkling clear system now," Martin reported, clearly elated.



Photo by Capt. Karen Huff

**HYDROLOGICAL HERO**  
South Carolina Army Guard PFC Tracie Roberts changes a cartridge filter in a mobile Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Unit. Roberts is a member of the Allendale-based 266th Quartermaster Detachment.





## HISTORY

• Commemorating Women's History Month

Norma Parsons opened the door for women serving in today's Guard

# Leading LADIES

As the National Guard reorganized its units after World War II, none of its ranks included women. Capt. Norma Parsons would change all that.

Her immersion into the all-male National Guard was no accident.

Prior to the war the only women serving in the military—in small numbers—could be found in the regular Army and Army Air Forces as nurses with the Army Nurse Corps (ANC). During the war, thousands of women served in both medical and non-medical fields. Those female officers who were not in the nurses corps, were joined by enlisted women to form the Women's Army Corps, commonly referred to as "WACs." They served with distinction in a great variety of non-combat related jobs, freeing men for front-line duty.

After the war when the Army reorganized it continued to include WACs in limited numbers to work in medical and non-medical jobs. This policy also included the Reserves.

However, because of the Guard's unique dual federal and state mission, there was no central authority to grant the authority to have allow women among its ranks.

Starting in the mid-1950s some Air Guard commanders received permission from the National Guard Bureau to employ female "augmentees," drawn from the Air Force Reserve, to work in their medical units. This policy permitted women (just officers) to conduct "traditional" stateside training in Guard medical facilities.

However, it was quickly realized that if these units were mobilized the women would return to their Reserve "parent" organization and the Guard units' readiness for deployment would be compromised. It became apparent that women must be allowed to directly serve as members of the Guard in order to maintain unit preparedness.

In July 1956, Congress, with strong support from most Guard leaders, enacted passage of Public Law 845, authorizing female officers in the National Guard.

Enter New York Air Guard Capt. Norma Parsons. After receiving federal recognition, she joined the 106th Tactical Hospital, becoming the National Guard's first woman.

The Army Guard's first woman soldier was 1st Lt. Sylvia Marie St. Charles Law, who received her federal

recognition on Jan. 21, 1957. After completing the Army's six-week medical orientation course at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, she was assigned to the Alabama Army Guard's 109th Evacuation Hospital.

Their inclusion into the Guard's ranks opened up the flood gates, somewhat. By the end of 1957 the Air Guard counted 42 female nurses. The Army Guard, however, had just 11 female nurses working in its 468 authorized positions. By 1960 only 56 women (12 percent of the authorized nurse slots) were included in a total Army Guard force of 401,765 personnel.

In October 1961 President John Kennedy mobilized 44,371 Army Guardmembers as part of America's response to the crisis over Berlin. Included in this number were 17 women nurses, marking the first time Guard women had been mobilized. The Air Guard mobilized 21,067 people, but there is no record indicating how many were women.

Throughout the 1960s almost all of the jobs open to military women were in the medical field, and only to officers. But the status of Guard women began to change



GUARD HISTORY

By CW02 John Listman  
Army Guard Historian

performing in many of the occupations traditionally reserved for men. This carried over into the military, as most non-combat positions became open to female soldiers.

By the mid-1970s, with the implementation of the all-volunteer force, women worked in many of the combat support and combat service support fields. They could be found maintaining aircraft and helicopters, driving fuel trucks, operating heavy construction equipment and working in the battalion headquarters of some Army Guard artillery units.

By the time the Gulf War began in 1991 more positions for women had opened up. This included jobs that put them in direct combat roles, such as fighter and helicopter pilots, and com-

mand positions, which exposed some lady leaders to direct enemy fire.

Although most military women are still barred by law from serving in direct combat roles, the fluid nature of modern war means that inevitably some will be exposed to enemy action.

Such was the case of PFC Charla Shull, a member of the Missouri Army Guard's 1138th Military Police Company.

Her company was on a routine training mission in Panama when Operation Just Cause began on Dec. 19, 1989. She was on the ground when her unit came under enemy mortar fire, making her the first Guard woman to taste combat.

During the Gulf War, hundreds of Guardswomen deployed to Saudi Arabia where they performed various tasks to support the Allied effort in removing Iraqi troops from Kuwait. Of the 34 active duty Guardmembers who died in the Gulf, eight were women, all of whom were killed in accidents.

After the Gulf War, women began moving into leadership positions in the Guard. In 1991, Wisconsin's Sharon VanderZyl was promoted to brigadier general, the first flag officer in the Army Guard. In 1997, Vermont Air Guard Lt.

Col. Martha Rainville, a maintenance officer with the 158th Fighter Wing in Burlington, became the first woman in the history of the National Guard to be appointed Adjutant General.

Today, women comprise about 10 percent of the Guard. If history is any indicator, as the National Guard moves into the 21st Century, they will continue to play an important, and probably expanded role, in the defense of their states and nation.

**Editor's Note:** Information used in this article is based on research conducted as part of an ongoing book project "I am the Guard: The History of the Army National Guard, 1636-2000." That book, being written by Lt. Col. Michael Doubler with Mr. Listman's research assistance, is expected to be published in 2001.

## LADIES FIRST



1st Lt. Sylvia Law, the Army Guard's first woman



The Guard's first lady, Lt. Col. Norma Parsons



In 1978 Arizona 2nd Lt. Marilyn Koon became the Air Guard's first woman pilot.

under the influence of several factors coming together at the same time.

On Nov. 8, 1967, Public Law 90-130 authorized the enlistment of women in the National Guard. All Army Guard enlisted women and officers, not in the ANC, were made members of the WAC. By 1978, with women integrated throughout the Army, the WAC was no longer needed.

Its inactivation, along with a law that guaranteed women equal treatment in regard to assignments and promotions, created a boom in recruiting. The Army Guard boasted 13,353 officers and enlisted women among its ranks in 1978.

By no coincidence, the "woman's movement" in America was gaining power and influence. Women started





# TRAINING



Photo by PFC Christopher Lew

U.S./Britain Guardmembers  
matched skills, history

## CHANCE for REDEMPTION

By PFC Christopher Lew  
Maryland National Guard

From a distance, it was hard to tell them apart.

That was the observation offered by Maryland Army Guard 1st Lt. Keith Brownwell, a anti-tank platoon commander with 1st Battalion, 115th Infantry, as he watched Welsh infantrymen train with Free State Guardmembers recently at Fort Pickett, Va.

Members of the United Kingdom's Territorial Army's 3rd Battalion, Royal Fusiliers spent two weeks at the 29th Infantry Division's proving ground to learn from each other.

Not surprisingly -- the Territorial Army

is the part-time British equivalent of the U.S. National Guard -- the soldiers discovered many similarities.

Lance Cpl. Nigel Brown, a Fusilier, said that his men took to the military operations in urban terrain training because the American tactics were so much like their own. He also credited the instructors with excellent technique. He said by walking and talking the Fusiliers through everything, they understood much better.

Despite these similarities however, there were still a number of differences said Spc. Gabriel J. Quinto, a 1-115th infantryman.

"The Fusiliers have teams arranged ahead of time for assault or clearing out an obstacle. On the other hand, U.S. troops have to organize at the time of the assault," Quinto said.

Quinto said that this type of training allowed the two sides to learn from each other.

"We teach them our techniques, but we also get to hear about their techniques," Quinto said. "It's a two-way process and, in some cases, I'm getting to learn better ways to do things."

This knowledge exchange was not without an ironic twist. The Fusiliers fought for the British in the decisive Battle of Yorktown during the Revolutionary War. During its urban combat training, the 1-

115th called the training site "Yorktown" -- after the Virginia city where British Gen. Charles Cornwallis surrendered to American forces in 1781.

But according to Welsh Lt. Chris Roberts, a platoon leader with the Fusiliers, it was all in good fun.

"It's a chance for redemption," he said jokingly. "We're going to get another crack at changing history."

The Royal Welch Fusiliers have been around for 310 years. They got their name from a type of highly accurate, 18th century rifle to protect the artillery. To set them apart, they wear a distinctive goose feather, or haeckel, as a battle honor. When in formal uniform the fusiliers wear the haeckel in their berets.

According to Lance Cpl. Gareth Williams, history is very important to the unit. For example, instead of using the modern form of "Welsh," they chose to keep the more conservative spelling of "Welch."

The Fusiliers draw its ranks from north Wales and are currently the only military unit in the region. The climate in Wales is usually damp and cold, so their exposure to considerably warmer Virginia weather was, in Brown's own words, "a real killer."

The Fusiliers also had to contend with a whole new ecosystem.

"It's unusual to worry about things smaller than you," said Fusilier Cpl. Alwin

**JOLLY GOOD TRAINING --**  
Members of the United Kingdom's Territorial Army fought with Maryland Army Guard infantrymen at Fort Pickett, Va.

Jones referring to the snakes, ticks and spiders that call Fort Pickett home.

Yet, many of the Fusiliers said that they relished the opportunity to train as a unit in a new environment. Since they are not full-time, these opportunities are often few and far between, according to Roberts. In this way, they face the same issues as the citizen-soldiers in this country.

For instance, the balance between civilian and military life is as delicate in Wales as it is in the United States, according to Williams.

"All of these guys have good jobs on the outside so sometimes it's hard to control them here," Williams said. "They're all intelligent lads and sometimes it's like having seven generals, each one of them having their own mind."

Nonetheless, when duty called, these part-time British soldiers proved to be up to the task.

In a different land, learning from a different army, the Fusiliers proved they weren't so different after all. The soldiers not only looked alike, as Brownwell observed, but they were, as Quinto insisted, "good ones" at that.