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THE ON GUARD

Volume XXVII, No. 10

Newspaper of the Army and Air National Guard

July 1998

Guard helps douse Florida fires



Charred Acres: Area larger than New York City enveloped by flames

By MSgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

Kevin Smith began a new job on June 30. The Florida Army National Guard sergeant walked into the charred and blackened world of a recently extinguished wildfire near the rural town of Welaka, on the eastern edge of the kindling-dry Ocala National Forest.

16-hour crash course in mopping-up areas devastated by more than 1,000 fires that have tormented desert-dry Florida for more than a month.

The new mission for 80 Florida Army Guard air defense artillery and signal soldiers, including five women, was to prevent new fires from erupting in burned over areas. That included another 21,000 acres near northern Perry that had been scorched by what was named the "Holiday Fire" since May 25, when Memorial Day was observed across America.

"Mop-up is every bit as important as hot-line duty, because if mop-up doesn't do its job, the hot-line people get to do their job all over again," the U.S. Forest Service's James Sorenson told the Guard soldiers who he helped train at the Florida National Guard's Camp Blanding.

Knocking down burned trees and smothering smoking roots and underbrush with dirt and water became the new job for the four 20-member Army Guard teams detailed to remote areas like Welaka and Perry in central Florida.

But Florida Division of Forestry officials have known for a long time they can count on the Guard.

"This is not the first time we've brought these folks to this dance. The Guard has been our savior with their helicopters and big bulldozers in many cases," said John Webster, the seasoned safety officer at the division's Welaka station.

"We have enough equipment and firefighters to handle normal fire years. But the normal years aren't here anymore," Webster added. "Too many people are living in subdivisions in rural areas. We have to have a rapid deploy-



Photos by MSgt. Bob Haskell

AIR AND GROUND ATTACK - From the cockpit, Black Hawk pilot CWO3 Christopher Tenaro (above) could watch the Florida Guard fight fires from above with buckets of water, or on the ground (Sgt. Kelvin Smith in Nomex suit, left) with shovels.

"I didn't know how hard it was going to be and how much they were going to push us," said Smith after he had labored in 100-degree heat to snuff out a smoldering hot spot in a forest layered with powdery ash. "But I am willing to do anything to get these fires under control."

Two days earlier, he had completed a

See FIRE, Page 5



COMMENTARY

• Peach of a Unit • Gung-ho for Guard • Blue with Envy

ABOUT the PAPER

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

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GUARD MAIL

Outstanding Omission

The article about the Kentucky Air Guard's 123rd Airlift Wing being identified as the most decorated unit in the Air National Guard (April) was not entirely correct.

Georgia's 116th Bomb Wing also has earned nine Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards. This unit, formerly the 116th Fighter Wing based at Dobbins AFB in Marietta, received its ninth award in 1995. The unit was officially converted from F15s to B1Bs and relocated to Robins AFB in April 1996.

The 123rd Airlift Wing has reason to be very proud. However, I feel proper recognition should also be given to past and present members of this great unit.

MSgt. Alex Robinson
Georgia National Guard

'Active'ly Agitated

This is in response to the letter by a Florida sergeant who implied reservists (April issue) are less professional than active component soldiers.

As a prior service soldier (1969-1972) and current Active Guard-Reserve soldier who has attended active component Advanced Individual Training (at age 43) and two leadership schools, I was never more disappointed then when I attended my AIT reclassification. There were 17 and 18-year-old soldiers -- who had just completed basic training -- dropping behind or out

of company runs; not due to fitness, but a lack of motivation. When I attended my Basic NCO Course "active" NCOs whined and complained openly when something didn't go their way.

Of the active component courses I have attended, each Guard soldier graduated. At BNCOC, all four Guardmembers that attended ranked in the top ten percent of the class, with three finishing in the top five.

Traditional Reserve and Guard soldiers have done more with fewer resources and training time than their "Brothers in Combat," and have sustained a high-level of readiness in combat and support missions throughout history.

Perhaps the 12 years the Florida sergeant spent on active duty should have taught him more than, "Oh heck, I might as well quit trying."

NCOs not only set the standards, they enforce them.

SSgt. Richard Everetts
Pennsylvania National Guard

Exercised over Difference

I was reading an article on physical fitness requirements for the Army Guard. Being in the Air National Guard for 27 years, it never occurred to me that the physical fitness programs could be so far apart. The requirements for a man of my age, 46-years-old, in the Army Guard would require me to run two miles in 17 minutes and perform 69 sit-ups at one time.

I know the job requirements are different between the Air National Guard

and the Army National Guard. It is hard to put demands on crew chiefs that are hurrying to turn in jets, sometimes with minimum people, and turn them around for the next day's flying.

The physical fitness program in the Air Guard is basically voluntary, except on that notorious day, the annual weigh-in. There is a lot of moaning and groaning during this period of time for Air Guard personnel, especially the older ones.

We do run and walk on base and try to stay in shape, some of us. I really think the Army Guard has an advantage doing the group exercise program, not to mention the camaraderie it builds. I think they have got an outstanding program.

SMSgt. Scott Younce
Ohio National Guard

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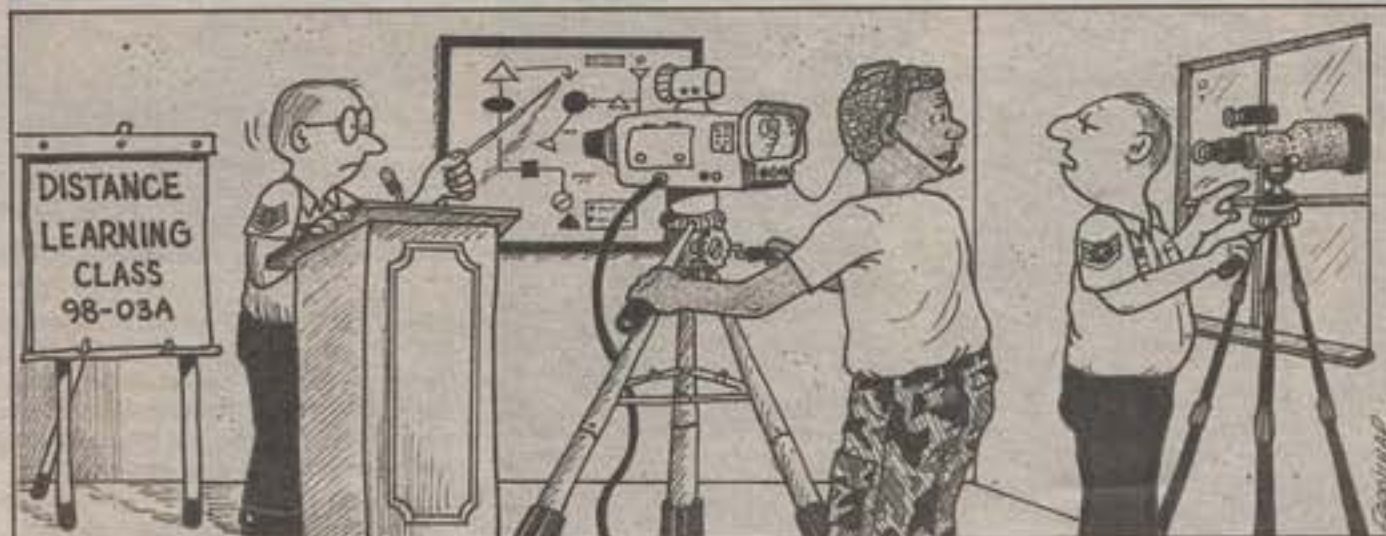
The *On Guard* welcomes letters from readers. All letters must include the writer's name, address and daytime phone. Names may be withheld upon request. All letters are subject to editing for style, content and space requirements.

You may FAX your 'Letters to the Editor' to DSN 761-0732 or (703) 681-0732. Letters can be mailed to: NGB-PAI-C, 2500 Army Pentagon, Washington, DC 20310-2500. Our e-mail address: malthanerj@ngb.ang.af.mil

GUARD TOONS

By Lyle Farguhar

Cartoonist: Lyle Farguhar, l.farguhar@ngb.ang.af.mil



"Looks like we have someone with a question in South Dakota."



IN THE NEWS

• Artillery Trade • Zero Violations • Bureau Moves

Guard, actives swap captains

■ Traded: West Virginia artillery unit picks up West Point grad

By MSgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

By July 31st, Major League Baseball's traditional trading deadline, the Army National Guard and the active Army are expected to have completed a unique trade of their own -- a Virginia Military Institute grad for a West Pointer.

An active Army captain, Anthony Demasi, will have joined a West Virginia Army Guard artillery battalion, and a West Virginia Army Guard artillery captain, J. Mark Hennigan, will have reported for two years of active duty at Fort Sill, Okla.

"This is another effort to build trust and confidence between the Army and the Army National Guard," said Gen. Dennis Reimer, the Army's Chief of Staff.

"Exchanging officers at the junior level will increase the understanding of the Total Force concept," predicted Maj. Gen. Allen Tackett, West Virginia's Adjutant General, who has orchestrated what is believed to be the first exchange of its kind.

West Virginia's 1st Battalion, 201st Field Artillery based in Fairmont will benefit from the trade. Beginning

this fall, it will become the first National Guard battalion on the East Coast to convert from the older M109 self-propelled howitzers -- that date back to the early 1960s -- to the high-tech M109A6 Paladins. They were introduced into the Army's field artillery inventory during this decade.

That battalion earned its combat spurs with the older M109s during the Persian Gulf War in 1991 as part of the allied force that drove the Iraqi army out of Kuwait.

Demasi, a 1993 West Point graduate, will help the battalion convert to the new self-propelled weapons because he has been working with the Paladins on active duty for nearly four years.

The Paladins, which have been developed since 1979, feature onboard computer and navigation systems so

they can stop and fire their 155-mm howitzers within 75 seconds, Demasi explained. The older M109s, he added, must first be "laid in" by their gun crews.

Tackett also expects Demasi to help in other areas.

"We have no officers or



MOUNTAINEER MEN - Capt. Anthony Demasi (left) goes to West Virginia and Capt. J. Mark Hennigan (above) will report to Fort Sill, Okla.

NCOs with Paladin experience," the Mountaineer State Adjutant General noted. "The rubber meets the road at the battery level."

■ See TRADE, Page 4

Air Guard reports 'zero' environmental violations

By Len Barry
National Guard Bureau

Zero never sounded so good. In fact, if you're David Van Gasbeck, the Air National Guard's environmental chief, it's a number to rally around.

For the first time in the history of environmental enforcement, he reported recently, not a single Air Guard installation nationwide was in violation of any federally-mandated environmental regulations.

"Notices of violation" -- or NOV's to those at the Environmental Protection Agency (the unrelenting federal arm who cites offenders) -- can range from improper storage of hazardous materials to spills, Van

Gasbeck noted.

"We've been close for some time, with just one NOV last fiscal year," he said. "We closed out that last one recently."

"This is a real high point in Air Guard environmental program history," Van Gasbeck added.

Just five years ago, the Air Guard had reported a compost heap of violations (61), Van Gasbeck noted. But through an aggressive "zero tolerance" approach to environmental missteps, that pile eroded quickly.

"It's a great credit to the entire Air Guard environmental team," Van Gasbeck insisted. "We couldn't have achieved this goal without the support of installation commanders and environmental managers out at our

bases, as well as our program managers, lawyers, Air Force regional environmental officers and other professionals at both the base and headquarters levels."

There also are nearly 110,000 citizen-airmen and women, Van Gasbeck wanted to credit for the milestone.

"Air Guardmembers at each installation have adopted an environmental culture into their everyday way of business," he said. "When everyone knows it's part of their job to be a good steward of the environment, your organization develops environmental awareness."

"And environmental awareness," he summarized, "is the best remedy for curing NOV's."

NATIONAL BRIEFS

Pentagon renovation prompts National Guard Bureau move

Due to the ongoing renovations to the Pentagon, Army and Air Guardmembers assigned to the National Guard Bureau will begin a three-phase move-out this month into new offices located in nearby Crystal City.

The new address will be: 1411 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, VA 22202-3259.

The new office building -- called Jefferson Plaza 1 or JP1 -- is located a few minutes South and East of the Pentagon in Crystal City. A shuttle bus departs the Pentagon L Stop every 15 minutes for JP1. There are also many commercial bus routes (9, 10, 13, and 23) that stop in Crystal City.

In addition, the "Metro" -- the D.C. area rail system -- is a short walk from JP1.

Parking is limited and expensive, however, there also are several hotels within walking distance.

If you have questions regarding the move or how to locate any NGB offices, please contact the Pentagon Move Team at: NGB/CVM, Crystal Park 5, 2451 Crystal Drive, Room 421, Arlington, VA 22245-5200. Call them at (703) 602-6520/DSN 332-6520. Their FAX number is (703) 602-4154.

Mobilization insurance OK'd

President Bill Clinton signed into law recently a supplemental appropriation bill that includes \$47 million to fund the Ready Reserve Mobilization Income Insurance Program (RRMIIP) liabilities.

Once funds become available, an official stated, a plan similar to the payout process used last year will be followed.

The first full monthly benefit payment was made in June for members who were on active duty. Payment of the deferred benefits will be made this month.

In addition, DoD officials reemphasized their commitment in identifying and analyzing options for addressing the entire range of Reservists' involuntary activation-related issues.

"As we explore alternatives to the insurance program, we will be looking for any indications that we have a problem recruiting and retaining personnel to meet Reserve end strengths, or attracting and retaining people with the right skills to meet operational requirements," an official said. "We will continue to assess the financial impacts Reservists may incur as a result of mobilization."

IN THE NEWS

TRADE

From Page 3

Hennigan, a 1990 VMI graduate, will learn plenty about Paladins during the next two years while assigned to the West Virginia outfit's active Army sister battalion at Fort Sill, the Army's field artillery training center.

Hennigan, 30, lives in Hershey, Pa., and commands B Battery in the West Virginia battalion that completed its annual training at Fort Pickett, Va., June 13.

He joined the West Virginia Army Guard in February 1993.

"I'm intrigued about the prospects of learning as much as I can about the Paladin system over the next two years and bringing that knowledge back to the West Virginia Guard," Hennigan said.

Demasi, 26, said he plans to learn a great deal about the National Guard. Initially, he is expected to become a full-time staff officer at battalion headquarters, and to command one of the firing batteries.

"This is a great opportunity to bring my expertise with the Paladin system to this battalion while they educate me about the Guard and its mission in the total Army," he said.

That education process is important, it was pointed out, because the Army National Guard is taking on 70 percent of the Army's field artillery mission.

It took a giant step forward two years ago when active Army Lt. Col. John Hennigan took command of the Louisiana Army Guard's 1st Battalion, 141st Field Artillery, the historic "Washington Artillery," in New Orleans. It was the first time since World War II that an active duty officer had assumed command of a National Guard unit.

Lt. Col. Hennigan, so far as anyone knows, is not directly related to Capt. Hennigan.

This active Army-National Guard trade, however, is breaking new ground, say Guard officers.

Demasi has strong ties to the artillery, the National Guard and West Virginia. His father is Col. Tony Demasi, an air defense artillery officer who now serves as chief of the Army Guard's Full-Time Support Division in Arlington, Va. The elder Demasi and his wife Mary Bea grew up in West Virginia.

Furthermore, Capt. Demasi's father-in-law is a retired Army field artillery colonel.

Gingrich lauds Guard, drug efforts

Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich recently sat down with members of the National Guard Bureau's Counterdrug Directorate for an upcoming counterdrug national satellite broadcast. What follows are excerpts from that interview.

Q: What role will the National Guard play in Congress' renewed effort to establish a bipartisan national drug policy?

Gingrich: I believe that we may have an opportunity for the Guard to have an even larger role in drug interdiction. And I think the Guard can play an even larger role in reaching out with youth education all across the country.

People respect National Guard men and women because they give their time to help their country, and show young people alternatives to drugs.

Q: What is your opinion of the Guard's involvement in drug demand reduction programs?

Gingrich: The National Guard has always had a tradition of defending America against foreign threats, of helping America in times of emergencies, and of playing a real role in building the community.

One of the greatest threats to America today is drugs. And when you can reach out to help a young person have a healthy life, instead of being a drug addict, you are ensuring that future citizens will grow up with the right attitude and the right education.

I think that's as significant a contribution as anyone can make in peacetime.

Q: Where is this country heading on demand reduction?

Gingrich: The number one trick is to get people to decide that they don't want drugs. We talk about Columbia, Mexico, Bolivia, Peru; but the real problem is in America. It's the person who buys them.



Photos by Maj. Rob Stone

"The Guard has played a tremendous role all over the world."

If we can stop people from wanting drugs, if we can convince them that drugs will ruin their lives, if the peer pressure message becomes "be drug free," then you are creating an environment for young people to do the right things ... and that cuts into the demand side.

Q: Where do you see the National Guard heading?

Gingrich: The National Guard provides us a very cost effective defense element. (It's why) The Guard has played a tremendous role all over the world, and is virtually everywhere the American military operates.

Guard elements have played a role in everything from stopping the drug dealer at the border, to providing advanced intelligence before they cross the border, to working with host countries in Central America and Latin America to stop the drug dealers where they are.

Q: You've said that personal accountability is one component of reducing demand. How?

Gingrich: First, parents have to take a

personal interest in their children and learn to recognize drug use.

There's a doctor in Florida who gives out drug testing kits for home use. He's says to parents: "either I'm going to use this when your child shows up in the emergency room, or you're going to use it when they show up at two in the morning." He's had a tremendous impact.

There was one young man who said, "If you really believe that your parents might ask you to take a test right there at home, it's a pretty big inhibitor against using."

We shouldn't kid ourselves. Having our parents set high standards matters. Having our parents tell us "Don't do it. I'm really counting on you" does change behavior.

We proved that in the 1980s, when drug use came down by 72 percent, because we sent the signal, "Just say No."

Secondly, I think we have to have accountability in our communities. No American should think they live in a drug-free community. Drugs are pervasive in the wealthiest suburbs, the poorest inner cities and the nicest small towns. Communities need our help stopping drugs and getting rid of drug dealers.

Q: How do you increase accountability?

Gingrich: I think programs like the Big Brothers/Big Sisters, the Boys and Girls Clubs and the Guard's mentoring program play a major role.

We live in an era where there's a lot more broken homes; more young people without roots, without parents, without mentors. Having someone who takes a genuine interest in a young person, someone willing to spend time with them, will make big a difference in that person's life.

And helping that young person grow also will enrich those of us who help.

DOZING down
DRUGS

Over a two week period, 14 soldiers with the Iowa Army Guard's 224th Engineer Battalion, armed with excavators, demolished 16 "crack houses" identified by the Sioux City Police Department as dens of criminal activity. Engineers with Iowa's 185th Fighter Wing, and troops with 1st Squadron, 113th Cavalry, also assisted.



Photo courtesy of the Iowa National Guard



Photos by MSgt. Bob Haskell

FIRES

From Page 1

ment force that can handle these fires. The Guard has become a support organization that is absolutely critical."

Indeed, Florida Guard officials were asked to train another 160 citizen-soldiers for the mop-up duty.

How different was this duty? Smith earns his civilian living as a truck driver for the United Parcel Service. As a citizen-soldier, he is a teletype operator for the Jacksonville area's 146th Signal Battalion.

As of July 3, 855 Florida Army and Air National Guard members were on state active duty, as part

of Operation Wet Down. They were helping more than 4,500 firefighters from 38 states bring Florida's worst wildfires since the early 1930s under control.

"As members of the affected communities, we have a personal and professional interest in providing firefighting support," said Col. Jimmy Watson, the Florida Army Guard's assistant adjutant general.

Black Hawk helicopter crews had dropped 1.4 million gallons of foam-laced water on infernos from 660-gallon "Bambi" Buckets during more than 120 missions since June 8. Georgia Army Guard aviators flying larger Chinook helicopters that haul 2,000-gallon buckets had added nearly another half-million gallons to that effort.

The Florida Air Guard's C-26 aircraft, equipped with infrared mapping equipment, helped forestry officials locate hot spots while flying above the blinding

FIRESIDE CHAT - U.S. Forest Service ranger Jim Sorenson briefs Florida's 'newest' firefighters on the perils of their mission.

smoke that cast an orange haze over the horizon.

Guardmembers on the ground sweated to operate and maintain bulldozers, water tankers and fire trucks while helping to cut fire lines and save homes in remote regions as 100-degree days prolonged the drought.

"We expected a drought after El Nino that would make conditions right for wildfires," said Florida forestry instructor Ira Jolly. "We had no idea it would last this long."

"We've come to the conclusion we can't keep the forest

from burning. All we can do is try to save the houses," explained CWO David Bennett, one of Florida's Black Hawk pilots.

By June 29, state officials indicated that the relentless efforts were paying off after more than

1,400 wild fires had destroyed 87 homes and scorched some 233,000 acres. That equates to 364-square-miles of Florida real estate, an area larger than New York City.

However, the situation took a dramatic turn for the worse the first two days in July when more wind-driven fires forced the evacuation of nearly 112,000 coastal residents and the closure a 125-mile stretch of Interstate 95. *The Washington Post* reported. Damage to property and livestock was estimated in the hundreds of millions of dollars. No lives were claimed.

Meanwhile, mopping up became an even more critical job



HEATED BATTLE - Whatever water was not being used on the fires, Sgt. K.W. Satterlee and others gulped to combat 100-degree heat.

INSIDE FLORIDA'S FIRES

Florida Army Guard Black Hawk crews fly over raging infernos

Charge of the Bucket Brigade

By MSgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

1st Lt. Jeffrey Glass flew into hell June 15th, his 28th birthday.

The Florida Army Guardsman was a newly certified UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter pilot who, suddenly, was flying 660-gallon "Bambi" Buckets of water at treetop level into an inferno of a wildfire in the northeastern corner of Florida.

"That was the day that all hell broke loose. It looked like B-52s had carpet bombed the place. I flew eight hours that day," recalled Glass of his baptism of fire that came just three months after completing Black Hawk training at Fort Rucker, Ala.

"I was very green when I started this," he related after flying more than 50 hours in less than three weeks. "Now, I feel pretty good."

Glass, a Florida highway patrolman by trade, was among the first National Guard soldiers called to state active duty in early June when it became clear that wildfires, which had begun May 25, would not go away.

A month later, six Black Hawks from Florida and four more from Georgia, manned by about 60 Guard aviation people, were based at the St. Augustine airport to

help Florida's Division of Forestry keep the wildfires from consuming single homes and entire towns.

"The calls generally come in the afternoon, after the heat and the wind bring the fires to life," explained Capt. Lewis Hersey, the aviation section's operations officer.

The calls have come often. By June's final weekend, Florida Army Guard helicopter crews had performed 120 missions, logged more than 206 hours of flight time and dropped 1,795 loads of foam-laced water — about 1.2 million gallons.

If a water source is close enough, a crew can fill and dump 30 loads in an hour, reported CWO David Smith.

"The guys fighting the fires on the ground depend on our quick turn-arounds," explained the full-time Guard instructor pilot.

Saving lives and homes, he assured, has been their priority.

"We try to wet down the ground between the fire and a bulldozer operator. Or we



Photos by MSgt. Bob Haskell

FLYING FLORIDIANS - SFC Kevin Heard (inset, left) prepares a 'Bambi' Bucket for fire duty. SSgt. Ronald Bradford (inset, right), a crew chief, watches for fires.

dump it around a house to stop the flames," Smith explained. "We never take a helicopter into the fire."

Still, it can be dangerous duty. Pilots told of ashes blowing through the open side doors and into their eyes and noses.

Despite the risks, aviators like SFC Kevin Heard, who grew up in St. Augustine where his father was a forest ranger, are willing to confront Florida's hell fires.

"People have homes here where they've raised their families," he said. "That gives us a greater sense of purpose."

for National Guard strike teams led by veteran foresters such as Jim Harrington, a U.S. Forest Service assistant fire management officer from Montana.

"They're easy to train. They work hard for you. And they're structured," observed the no-nonsense Harrington, who has fought fires with Guard soldiers many times.

Florida's 80 new firefighters

were told many times to be careful.

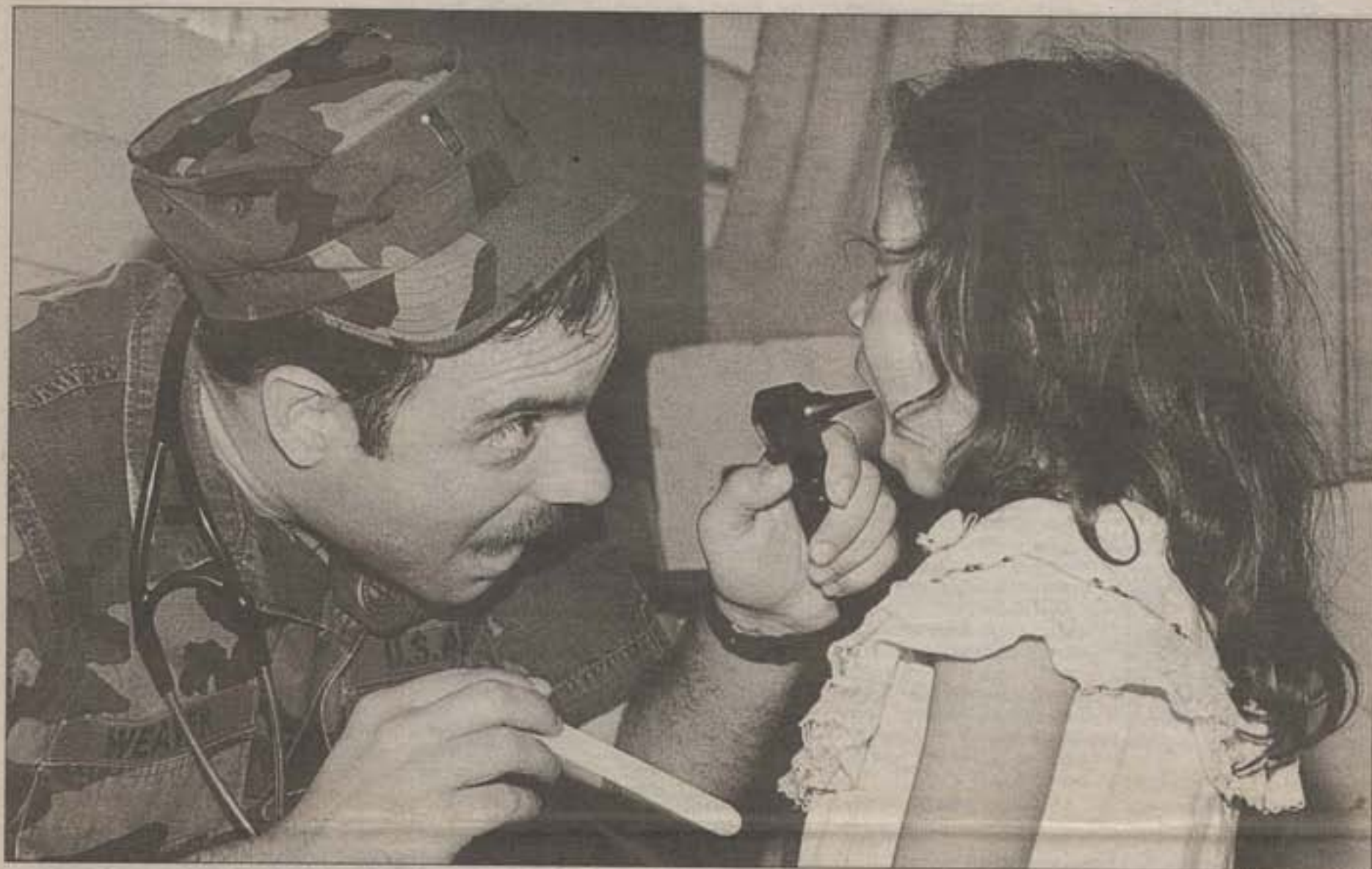
They were issued yellow, fire-retardant clothing. They were warned about trees that have been hollowed out by disease and that can shoot glowing embers into the air like big chimneys. They were shown how to wrap themselves inside blanket-like fire shelters and lay face down should flames cut off their

escape routes.

"We can't send our people to help in this battle until they have the skills and safety training that will make them effective," Watson insisted.

At least one of the 20 Guard soldiers who reported for fire duty June 20 heeded the advice.

"I will look at the woods in a completely different way," vowed Spc. Kevin Wright.



Photos by Sgt. Len Butler

INSIDE BELIZE

By Sgt. Len Butler
Texas National Guard

They came to help those less fortunate, the poverty-stricken. They left with a firsthand lesson on human resiliency.

For medical professionals with the Texas Army Guard's 111th Medical Battalion (headquartered in San Antonio), their recent two-week annual training to Belize to provide medical treatment, and preventative medicine and instruction in hygiene and diseases to the citizens of the Orangetown district, proved mutually beneficial.

Belize, located on the Caribbean side of Central America, has a dual identity. The former British colony enjoys a reputation as a tropical paradise, known primarily for its beautiful island chain of white sand beaches, abundant water activities and ancient Mayan ruins. But further inland, one finds immense poverty. Many families work in the cane fields, a very dangerous occupation. Along with the threat brought on by the tropical heat, deadly poisonous snakes thrive.

The 111th worked out of a Belize Defense Force (BDF) compound. From the compound, the medical teams traveled by

Texas medics go to Belize to assist those less fortunate. They returned with a firsthand lesson about human resilience

bus to five villages within the Orangetown district. To alert the villagers, members of the Belize Ministry of Health and Sports went door-to-door, informing the villagers of the 111th's arrival.

Once at the site, villagers were asked what type of treatment they needed.

As 111th medics setup their first site at San Pablo, Jose Tepas stood by watching as a long line of patients formed.

"Many times we don't have the things we need to treat our people, and it is hard for many of us to get transportation to the hospital," Tepas said. "This makes me very happy to see the Americans here."

Once checked in, Belizeans went through a number of "stations," based on the kind of care they were seeking.

Spc. Arlo Mason, who checked patients' vital signs, said it was important for the military to show compassion.

"We are here to experience a realistic training environment to prepare us in the event of an actual deployment," he noted.

Healing HANDS

"More important though, we are here to do our best to treat as many people as we can."

After "vitals," patients went into preventative medicine. There, they were given toothbrushes, vitamins and instruc-

tion on personal hygiene, including information on viruses carried by mosquitoes and flies.

Although English is the official language of Belize, Spanish was the main language spoken during the mission. Other languages, reflecting the district's different regions, also were spoken.

Maj. John Ramirez called it a learning experience.

"Communication is important to our success," he said. "I've been exposed to English, Spanish, Creole and three different dialects of the Mayan language."

The 111th battalion also staffed a dental section at each site. Though not an ideal environment for extracting teeth, the two dentists on hand, Lt. Col. Robert

Cater and 1st Lt. Aubrey Henshaw, made the most of the facilities they had. Clip-on spotlights were used to light the classrooms they operated in.

"It's not a perfect situation," Cater said. "But the Belizeans I've seen have been both polite and friendly."

Hobbled by a fractured ankle sustained at the BDF compound, Henshaw refused passage home. Instead, he extracted teeth from a chair.

"There's no way I would miss this," he said. "I love helping the children, and I have made friends along the way. The ankle never was a problem."

After dental, patients went to the treatment room. There, the villagers received outpatient-type care, such as having wounds cleaned and cysts removed.

Unfortunately, not everyone could be cured. Sesario Morio, 79, came in looking for help with his arm.

Morio had severely broken his arm in a car accident 23 years earlier and never had it set properly. As a result, his hand had lost all function with his fingers curling permanently inward. Morio's arm hung limp, only held together by the muscles around the broken limb.

"It's a shame when we see a patient such as this," Capt. Jerry Bartlett said. "If a cast had been put on, or with even just a splint, he could have kept function in his arm. Now it's useless."

INSIDE ECUADOR

Return to the
JUNGLE

Vietnam vet
Col. Victor
Ortiz left his
civilian life to
serve in South
America

By Spc.
Aaron Reed
Texas National
Guard

between the two places is immense.

It's a distance measured in time and space, in keeping a fragile peace rather than firing artillery shells at the enemy; it's the distance between a young man, fresh out of college and officer basic course, and a middle-aged husband and father of two, high school counselor and citizen-soldier.

Ortiz, the Texas Army Guard's 49th Armored Division Artillery commander, was tapped to become the first National Guard officer to command the U.S. contingent to the Military Observation Mission, Ecuador and Peru, or MOMEF.

In January, the Castroville, Texas, native assumed command -- and his place as the senior American observer -- for six months.

"It's almost a crime to get paid for having as much fun as I am here," Ortiz said matter-of-factly.

But it's also work. The MOMEF force includes more than a hundred soldiers from the four nations (Brazil, Argentina, Chile and the United States) guaranteeing the cease fire between Peru and Ecuador.

As the U.S. contingent commander, Ortiz represents U.S. interests on the *estado mayor*, or general staff, and also serves as the M-4, with responsibility for logistics, communications and air travel to and from the remote jungle headquarters in Patuca, Ecuador.

"Sitting on the general staff is the biggest challenge," Ortiz said. "Logistics; I learned that coming

up. That's our bread and butter. But representing U.S. interests. I think as long as I make good, level-headed decisions, I'll be okay."

Ortiz said that because Spanish is the official language of the operation, the daily two-hour *estado mayor* meeting -- presided over by a Brazilian three-star general

-- is the most difficult part of the day.

"I've had to learn to listen very carefully for nuances and words I'm not used to hearing," he said. "Peru's dialect of Spanish is different than Chile's, which is different from Ecuador's. And for Brazil, like us, Spanish is a second language."

Ortiz laughingly credits his parents for his knowledge of Spanish.

"I learned the language when I was a youngster and we would visit my grandparents in Puerto Rico," he said. "My mom just wanted me out of the house, so she told me to go outside and play with the kids there."

That sink-or-swim introduction to Spanish made his formal studies of the language a breeze, Ortiz said. It was one of the reasons the 52-year-old colonel got his current job. Fluency in Spanish was one of the criteria for the MOMEF posting. Candidates for the job also had to be Army War College graduates and brigade commanders.

According to Col. Frederick Abt, U.S. Army South's deputy chief of staff for operations, the post-Cold War drawdown of active component forces also reduced the pool of candidates qualified for the MOMEF command.

"There were only six qualified O-6s on active duty," he reported. "Five were in mid-assignment and one was about to retire. So we expanded the search to include colonels in the National Guard and Army Reserve."

"Just as it has become more commonplace for the Army to call upon reserve component units in specialized fields like civil affairs, public affairs and military history," Abt added, "we likewise frequently need individuals with special skills to augment active duty personnel."

One skill not in the job description, but which Ortiz believes has been invaluable to him, is his experience as a high school counselor for the South San Antonio Independent School District.

"My experience as an educator has helped me in learning how to deal with people," Ortiz said. "I'm more understanding, more patient. I don't blow up easily."

Working with five different foreign militaries, those traits have come in handy, he said. "You have to understand that people do things differently here," Ortiz observed. "Diplomacy is a new language I've learned."

Ortiz also has impressed many of the 21 soldiers assigned to the MOMEF.

"Col. Ortiz takes great care of the soldiers," said Sgt. Michael Young, a satellite communications operator from the 252nd Signal Company at Fort Clayton, Panama. "He's like a father figure. He can be tough, but he honestly cares about us."

"And he's the first O-6 I've ever seen who gets dirty with the guys," he added. "He really leads by example."

With a smile, Ortiz related a recent incident.

"I was bored to death one day, so I decided to do some maintenance on my Explorer. I was out there checking the fluid levels -- the oil was low, the battery levels were low. I was under the hood just having a ball."

"I turn around, and there's a circle of people behind me, just gaping," Ortiz continued. "They had never seen a colonel getting his hands dirty under the hood of a car."

The fix for the long-standing border dispute between Ecuador and Peru does not appear to be so easy. Peace talks in May did not lead to the hoped-for treaty, and a small U.S. contingent is expected to remain at Patuca, at least for the near future.

After 180 days, Ortiz said he will leave Ecuador this month with a sense of appreciation. He's also eager to return to his Lone Star artillery division.

"This has been a fantastic experience," Ortiz said. "But I will not go back to Texas and say, 'Well, I've done that (MOMEF), so everything that follows is less than that.'"

"I love my artillery," he added. "This year will be my first 'Warfighter' as DivArty commander. I'm looking forward to it."



CARING HANDS - PFC Veronica Acosta cleans a wound at a treatment site in Belize. 1st Lt. Dale Weaver (opposite, left) checks Lydia Vasquez's throat.

But for every patient that couldn't be helped, there were many more who were. At one treatment site, two-year-old Roseanne Reban came in with a fever of 106 degrees.

Rushed to the front of the line, PFC Veronica Acosta wasted no time. She gave the little girl Tylenol, then sponge-bathed her with cool water.

After the bath, Acosta dressed little Roseanne, and cradled the sleeping child for two hours, taking her temperature every 15 minutes.

"She'll be okay now," Acosta said quietly, indicating that the infant's temperature had dropped to 97.5 degrees.

"This is what makes it worthwhile," she added, "to help a child who needs it."

At the pharmacy -- the final station -- patients needing prescriptions filled were greeted by Lt. Col. Richard Sanchez. No stranger to Central American deployments, he has been on medical missions in Honduras, Guatemala and Costa Rica.

"I enjoy coming to Central America," he said, "and helping to provide medical care to the people in these isolated areas where medicine is rarely available."

"One thing I will never forget is the gratitude of the people," Sanchez added. "The children come by just to give us a hug and say 'thanks' for being here."

Truck driver Israel Chi transported the 11th's medical supplies and equipment from site to site.

A proud man, Chi said he was concerned about people coming to his country and pitying the Belizean people.

"Sure, we don't have the things that many people in other countries typically have," he observed. "But we are a hard-working people. We believe in family."

"We do the best we can with what little we've been given," Chi added, "and that is all anyone can do."



Photo by Aaron Reed

Col. Victor
Ortiz

JOINT READINESS TRAINING CENTER

Only 29 of 110 men survived Vietnam's Hill 875. Oregon's A.J. Pilant is one

Driven by memories to share knowledge

By MSgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

There are times when soldiering doesn't leave much time for observing special days.

On June 14, for example, 1st Sgt. A.J. Pilant was shepherding 52 Army National Guard combat engineers from Oregon through a makeshift rifle range as a hot wind blew across Fort Polk, La.

It was the U.S. Army's 223rd birthday. It was also Flag Day.

Pilant's people were zeroing laser-emitting devices that had been attached to their weapons for the simulated firefights they were anticipating during the coming week. They were attached to the Oregon Army Guard's 41st Infantry Brigade that was gearing up for nine days of training at the Joint Readiness Training Center.

The birthday cake and ice cream would have to wait.

It was no big deal, because the wiry Pilant could have told his engineers about a Thanksgiving that passed him by more than 30 years earlier, when he was a young airborne soldier, a mortar man, fighting for his life on a remote hill near Dak To in South Vietnam's Central Highlands.

At 51, A.J. Pilant still harbors the mixed emotions as a survivor of the five-day battle for Hill Eight-Seven-Five.

"One question we always asked was 'Why me?'" he recalled. "Why was I left? Why did my buddies get it and I didn't?"

He has had lots of company. Survivors of Gettysburg and Omaha Beach asked the same questions.

Pilant's eyes grow moist and his voice thick when he recalls his buddies who were flown off that hill in body bags on Thanksgiving 1967. Their memory is what drives him to teach his citizen-soldiers every trick he has ever learned in combat.

Only 29 of the estimated 110 men in his company who went up that hill survived the battle, Pilant said. Many of those men, including the commander and a chaplain, were wiped out in one blinding instant by a 500-pound bomb mistakenly dropped from an American plane.

"Men who have been in combat talk about the brotherhood of battle," Pilant said. "What they say is true. You know

what that red stands for on that flag."

He was 21 that day, a private first class, who had been drafted a year earlier and who had gone Airborne because it paid an extra \$55 a month. As an elite "sky soldier" in the 173rd Airborne Brigade, he performed search and destroy missions — his outfit's specialty in Vietnam.

Pilant belonged to Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Airborne Regiment, one of the units ordered to drive a battalion of the North Vietnamese Army's 1st Infantry Division off Hill 875 about five miles from the Cambodian border. The NVA soldiers were dug in deep, and a far more formidable foe than the Viet Cong.

The attack was ordered because it reflected Gen. William Westmoreland's strategy to "find, fix and destroy" the enemy, wrote Edward J. Murphy in his graphically detailed book *Dak To*. "It was just one more place where the enemy could be killed."

To A.J. Pilant, it was a place to survive. "It gave you an appreciation for water, for food and for what the enemy could do to you," he said. "We spent three days locked on a hill, and nobody could get anything to us. We saw helicopters shot down trying to fly in supplies.



Vietnam survivor: 1st Sgt. A.J. Pilant.

"The NVA were right on top of us. There was lots of artillery, and we could feel the napalm suck the oxygen out of the air. We could smell the 'black licorice' on the enemy soldiers, the opium sticks they chewed to keep them hyped up.

"We really had everything going smooth," he continued, "until that bomb landed inside our perimeter. I was digging inside my foxhole when the bomb hit. I was one of the lucky ones."

PFC Pilant finally made it to the top of Hill 875 that Thanksgiving Day. He was then flown out of harm's way with about 20 other members of his company.

He survived Vietnam to raise his family in Oregon with his wife Sharon. He is now part of a crew paying close attention to radiation levels while painstakingly dismantling a nuclear power plant.

He joined the Oregon Army Guard in 1985, and is now the first sergeant for Company C, 1249th Engineer Battalion.

Intent on passing along the lessons he learned, Pilant spent the morning before the exercise at Fort Polk teaching troops how to take out a sniper.

"We were the precursors," Pilant said, "for the things they're teaching us here."



Polk's Joint Readiness Training Center is testing many Guard combat unit's mettle under fire

HEAT of BATTLE

By MSgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

Sooner or later it catches up with you.

You booted algebra, so you have to take it over. You have to learn how to use a computer. It's time to take driver's ed. You're a little rusty on calling in artillery or treating a sucking chest wound.

So you go to summer school. For many, it's a laid back time to focus on one subject; when teachers don't demand quite so much as they do from September through May.

Obviously, you have never attended summer school at Fort Polk in central Louisiana. You also were not part of the Oregon Army National Guard's 41st Separate Infantry Brigade that spent the last half of June sweltering at the JRTC, the Joint Readiness Training Center that is the Army's advanced academy for light infantry.

The 3,200-man brigade commanded by Brig. Gen. Alexander Burgin spearheaded a 5,800-member task force of reserve component troops who took on one of the toughest home teams in the country, Fort Polk's opposing force of airborne and armored cavalry troops. It was



like playing football at Notre Dame.

The Guard's visiting team made a pretty good impression.

"Hey, these guys came here to learn. They're not as bad off as I thought they'd be," said SSgt. Leonard Ortega, one of the center's multitude of observer-controllers who paid close attention to how well the Guardsmen handled the hundreds of tasks that modern infantry soldiers are expected to know.

Some of the units did not bring everything, such as binoculars and the spare barrels for their machine guns that they would take to war pointed out SSgt. Edmund Oswalt, another observer-controller.

"They need to work on their movement techniques and battle drills, but their casualty evacuations and water re-supplies are excellent," added Oswalt who was watching the Guard in action for the first time after a year at the center.

"They get their injured people out fast, a lot better than regular Army units. And they're not quitting on us," praised Ortega.

Training rotations at Fort Polk and at the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, Calif., are the most realistic peace-time challenges available to the Army National Guard's 15 en-





An Oregon Army Guard radioman (far left) coordinates a troop insertion with Black Hawk (inset) pilots. Polk evaluators raved about the Oregon Guard's ability to take care of its wounded (left).

Photos by MSgt. Bob Haskell

UNDER FIRE - An Oregon commander (top page, left) calls in an air strike. Beaver State infantrymen (left) take cover during a battle with opposing forces.

that gives off an annoying, high-pitched tone when soldiers are hit by lasers attached to weapons. It left little doubt who were the victors and the victims.

Otherwise, the living wasn't easy, and, oh brother, was it ever summer.

The free-flowing, non-stop course in infantry tactics was held over 139,000 acres of tough wooded and sometimes swampy terrain during nine straight days that were downright refreshing when the temperatures did not soar into triple digits. Three sources of water were the stifling humidity, the salty sweat that soaked brown T-shirts and what the citizen-soldiers could carry on their backs.

An estimated 250 citizen-soldiers had to be treated for heat-related injuries during the first week, said a brigade spokesman, Maj. Matt Hennick. Most were observed for 72 hours and returned to duty. Two soldiers were listed in stable condition after being treated for heat stroke.

The thousands of troops carried on as well as they could because they

wanted to be at Fort Polk and because they knew that no one ever promised the infantry any rose gardens. It was the chance for Oregon's senior sergeants and junior lieutenants, for its corporals and colonels, to discover what they do and do not know about light infantry doctrine and techniques.

"We knew this would be a big deal, to come to one of the top training facilities in the nation," said Sgt. Matthew Enos, a college senior studying computer information science, during the third Friday in June. He belongs to the Oregon brigade's 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry. They had been flown at treetop-level into the exercise box aboard Black Hawk helicopters three days earlier.

"We were not expecting as many people to go down from the heat. It has slowed all of us down. But this is really good training. It's really effective," acknowledged 2nd Lt. Gary Depp, a Marine veteran and one of that battalion's platoon leaders.

That morning's mission had involved escorting a supply convoy in Humvees bristling with machine guns and anti-tank missile launchers around a minefield and into a small community.

The convoy was hit with automatic weapons and simulated artillery fire by the opposing force. Army Guard Cobra gunships patrolled overhead looking for the bad guys. But the convoy had to pull out before delivering the supplies because of enemy fire.

The tempo would gradually build to a fever pitch, highlighted by a battle with a fortified opposing force, before the exercise ended five days later.

This summer class was unique for a couple of reasons.

It was the largest out-of-state deployment for Oregon National Guard troops since World War II, said Maj. Gen. Raymond Rees, the state's adjutant general.

It was the biggest rotation hosted by the training center that anyone at Fort Polk could remember. In all, 7,400 tactical and support troops in Guard

and other reserve units from 22 states -- from Rhode Island to Hawaii -- took part. Most rotations peak out at 6,000 soldiers, it was explained.

It pulled together, for example, 14 Guard soldiers from six states into an intelligence cell commanded by Oregon Maj. Rosemarie McCabe. They tracked the action going on in the field and projected what could happen three days into the future. Two Texas helicopters, crammed with electronic gear and a 31-man long-range surveillance detachment from Indiana, told that cell what the enemy was doing.

"This rotation is taking up every bit of training area available to Fort Polk," Nance said.

Unlike many summer schools, visitors at Fort Polk train in a scenario selected by their commander, and they do not pass or fail.

"This is force-on-force training," stressed SFC Anthony Lewis in the operations center. "We coach, we train and we mentor. We emphasize casualty play. The conditions here are tougher than any I encountered in Grenada, Panama or Saudi Arabia."

"During the after-action reviews," Lewis added, "the units themselves frequently figure out what they did wrong and how to fix it. That's important, because after the training, we're all in this together."

That the observer-controllers take a much more active role than umpires at a baseball game was apparent during the Friday morning mission to resupply the town.

SFC Eason Hines told four sweating Guardsmen they had 90 seconds to carry a "wounded" lieutenant about 100 yards up a wooded slope to a medic or the officer would be listed as killed in action. Then Hines suggested a more direct route to the aid station than the soldiers had been following.

The four picked up the litter and ran helibent to ensure their officer got help in time.

"This," Hines insisted, "is the essence of JRTC."

hanced brigades expected to be prepared for combat or peacekeeping operations anywhere in the world within 90 days of mobilization.

"This is where every light infantry brigade in the Army comes to train," said Dan Nance, spokesman for the post that has been conducting this training year-round since 1993. "This is a very tough opposing force. They can duplicate every kind of enemy that our infantry and special operations troops could encounter anywhere in the world."

"It's as real as you can get without shooting real bullets and taking real casualties," Burgin told visiting journalists from Oregon. "This training is designed to overload the system. If we did what we normally do, we wouldn't have to come here."

Everyone wore laser-sensitive gear

No longer a novelty, Distance Learning has become a necessity

By MSgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

It is easy to imagine Lt. Col. Craig Bond at the controls of an AH-64 "Apache" attack helicopter, locked on an enemy tank to launch a Hellfire missile from three miles away. The lean, 48-year-old Bond certainly seems focused enough to do a lot of damage from a distance with the right stuff.

The 3.7-mile range of a Hellfire, however, is a mere stroll across the street compared to the distances on which the Army National Guard aviation officer from Maryland is focusing his energies these days.

Distance learning has become Craig Bond's main mission in life as the Army National Guard's distance learning team chief at the Readiness Center in Arlington, Va.

The team's motto? "Those who learn fastest win."

Distance learning involves transmitting standardized training lessons on cyberspace video and audio hook-ups to citizen-soldiers who are far from the places where the classes are being conducted.

"Distance learning is one of the most cost-effective ways to keep us more responsive than other fighting forces," insisted Bond. His five-member team is spearheading the Army Guard's effort to train thousands of citizen-soldiers in everything from unit clerk procedures to warfighting tactics for a lot less money than it costs to send them to resident training facilities for prolonged periods.

"The National Guard can no longer afford to satisfy its training demands by sending soldiers to distant training academies and schools," states an April information paper. "Only distance learning offers the potential for the Guard to increase its state of readiness within the constraints of manpower and budget."

The training is critical for those Guard soldiers who must maintain their proficiency and for others who must learn new skills because unit missions have changed or because downsizing has forced them to find different military homes.

Distance learning uses today's real-time technology to train citizen-soldiers in a network of classrooms being set up across the country—from Augusta, Maine, to Ashland, Ore. The intent is to take the training to the soldiers instead of taking the soldiers to the training.

They can talk to one another from up to 70 remote locations over an audio bridge and on classroom microphones called Polycoms. They can see one another, as well as instructors and visual aids, on



REACHING out to TEACH someone

video hookups originating at such facilities as the Guard's Professional Education Center in Little Rock, Ark., and Army schools. They can teach and they can confer without the expense and time of leaving their home turf.

It is a far cry from pursuing the old system of correspondence courses, including the Army's Sergeants Major Academy and officers' command and general staff colleges, through the mail.

Distance learning may be as old as the stagecoach, but it has come alive during the past 15 years thanks to the wonders of computers and the Internet, said Angela Messer, a distributive learning associate with the McLean, Va., firm Booz-Allen & Hamilton. She has been helping the National Guard develop its nation-wide network for three years.

That network, she explained, is grounded on the best ideas from academic institutions such as Virginia Tech and the University of Maryland, from communications giants such as MCI and Sprint, and from successful state Guard networks including Maryland, Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

"Soldiers and trainers will be able to spend less time behind the windshield and more time training," predicted Fred Poker, another Booz-Allen consultant who is helping the Guard develop courses and train distance learning instructors.

Distance learning has clearly arrived.

Beginning this year, the Army has earmarked an average of \$100 million a year through 2005 to establish distance learning centers and classrooms and develop courses, it was explained in June. Army officials envision teaching about 450 courses in nearly 750 classrooms at soldiers' home stations by 2007.

That process includes redesigning the courses so they can be taught over the network. At least 31 courses are expected to be redesigned each year, explained Army Guard Lt. Col. Peyton Williams, a training technology manager at Army headquarters in Washington.

The Army Guard, meanwhile, is spending \$103.7 million of congressionally appropriated funds on a four-year program through this September to develop its own network that will compliment the Army's distance-learning system.

The Guard's long-range goals include:

- Installing 600 to 900 classrooms throughout the country within a 60-minute drive of 95 percent of all citizen-soldiers. Four types of facilities range from single workstations to classrooms with 18 workstations. Thirty classrooms have been set up since last year. Another 64 were shipped out in April.

- Redesigning approximately 70 Army Guard functional courses so they can be taught over the network. Eight of these courses are already being taught from the Professional Educational Center.

- Training a cadre of instructors in distance learning protocol so that courses and conferences can be conducted in an orderly fashion for people on line throughout the country. Careful organization and

BONDED EFFORT - Lt. Col. Craig Bond (left), Robert Weber, Angela Messer and Maj. Kevin Wright are making training more accessible for all Army Guardmembers.

preparation is essential, cautioned Messer. "There can be no more shoot-from-the-hip instruction," she said. Distance learning instructors need to know how to interact with students at remote locations.

- Making the facilities available to other community, state and federal agencies, such as the General Services Administration, when they are not being used by the nation's citizen-soldiers.

The National Guard network has already begun to prove itself.

The Guard Bureau's Distributive Training Technology Project was inducted into the Smithsonian Institution's Permanent Research Collection at the Museum of American History and Technology in Washington on April 6. Lt. Col. Phil Vermeer, the project's former director, accepted the award.

"The National Guard Bureau is using information technology to make great strides toward remarkable social achievement in education," said David Allen, chairman of the museum's information technology division.

During two days in May, a distance learning audio conference dealing with the ways and means of obtaining distance learning courseware connected 31 states and Puerto Rico with experts at Arlington and Fort Eustis, Va. Guardmembers participated at 55 different sites.

And Iowa Army Guard Maj. Michael Staebler estimated last October that using the network to put six enlisted members of the 1st Battalion, 109th Aviation through a helicopter repair transition course at home saved the government

WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

Preparing for
DISASTER

By MSgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

National Guard officials were all ears about a subject that can defy the imagination as experts from across the country studied the ways and means of dealing with weapons of mass destruction during two June days in Arlington, Va.

The upshot from the first conference of its kind hosted by the National Guard Bureau was that a lot of people, especially first responders, need a lot of training to cope with biological, chemical and even nuclear attacks on the homeland by terrorists who do not play by anybody's rules.

"Five people don't leave a big footprint," warned FBI supervisor Basil Doyle. "We have no intelligence indicating that terrorist groups are preparing weapons of mass destruction in this country. But we had no intelligence before the Oklahoma City and World Trade Center bombings."

"This is clearly a critically important study of a critically important issue," Charles Cragin, assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs, charged nearly 150 police and fire officials, physicians, clergy, educators and government leaders who deliberated on June 8-9 at the Army National Guard's Readiness Center.

"Weapons of mass destruction and cyber-terrorism are the Achilles heel of the United States," Cragin said. "We will be attacked, if we are attacked, at our weakest point. We are most vulnerable here in the homeland."

The conference generated far more questions than it produced answers for the Guard Bureau that must report the results of a \$10 million study to Congress in September.

The group will meet again this month.

No one in June claimed to have cornered the market in dealing with disasters as catastrophic as the first atomic bombs.

"Weapons of mass destruction is first and



Photo by MSgt. Bob Haskell

foremost in the minds of the American people right now," said Lt. Gen. Edward Baca, Chief of the National Guard Bureau. "This is a learning experience for us, to learn what we need to do to assist you."

Maj. Gen. Roger Schultz, the new director of the Army National Guard, was even more direct.

"The military is inclined to take charge," he said, punctuating his points with a cocked thumb and finger. "That has caused a bit of tension within the response community. That was not our intent."

Schultz has recently finished a nine-month Pentagon tour as the Army's deputy director of military support that coordinates military support to state and local governments in times of disaster.

President William Clinton has bounced the weapons of mass destruction ball into the National Guard's court with his recent announcement that 10 states have been selected to activate 22-member rapid assessment teams of full-time Guard personnel beginning in October.

Those states are California, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas and Washington. They were selected, explained Defense Secretary William Cohen, based on threat assessment, high-value targets, the availability of the Guard's airlift assets, proximity to federal emergency resources and affiliations with adjoining states.

But what will the teams assess? How many police and firemen who are first on the scene will be put in harm's way? How much training should they have? How quickly can the first responders count on federal help? Who'll be in charge? And just what is a weapons of mass destruction incident?

Those were some of the complex issues debated at length during the two days in Virginia.

Biological agents, for example, are considered 43 percent of the threat level, pointed out the FBI's Doyle, because agents such as anthrax may not be immediately obvious. They are the hardest to detect and the hardest to combat, he explained.

GAME PLAN - Guard and law enforcement officials (left) met to exchange ideas on how to combat WMD.

The experts, split into eight different working groups, did agree on some basic points.

- There are no experts on the subject in this country.

- The system for dealing with terrorist attacks is already in place. Local, state and federal agencies have worked together many times in the past while dealing with floods, hurricanes, riots and this year's El Nino driven storms, many pointed out.

- There is no national strategy for educating the American people about the threat or coping with large numbers of casualties.

- Leaders must create a national vision for dealing with weapons of mass destruction.

"We are in our infancy of trying to identify these issues," said George Foresman, assistant coordinator for Virginia's Department of Emergency Services. "We have the structure, but we do not have adequate resources in this country to deal with large numbers of contaminated or exposed individuals," he pointed out.

"There is a lack of public education for preparing for the unthinkable," observed Dr. George Buck from Florida's St. Petersburg Junior College. "We had 167 people killed in Oklahoma, but we've never had 500,000 people killed. That's what we need to prepare for."

As complicated as the issues may be, the group appreciated Federal Emergency Management Agency coordinator Michael Austin's assessment of why weapons of mass destruction events are different from natural disasters.

People cause them. They provoke fear and perhaps panic. They may be invisible. They may demand special protective actions. They may spread contamination to wide areas.

Therefore, despite the uncertainties of dealing with the unknown, Austin said, "we have to work faster and get out there quicker."

Determining the best ways to do that is what the June and July meetings in Virginia are all about.

Those who took part in the June meetings thought the National Guard Bureau had made a good start.

"There has been a better quality of discussion here over the last couple of days than I've heard in a long time," observed Foresman. "If anyone thinks we have solved all of the problems, we have not. But we have to credit the National Guard Bureau for beginning the process."

DISTANCE

From Page 10

\$42,443 it would have cost to send them to Virginia for 59 days.

This is not to say that soldiers can be trained in every military skill with long-distance technology. Developing combat skills, for example, still depends on building teamwork, maneuvering, and firing live rounds.

Maj. Gen. Roger Schultz, who

became the Army Guard's 17th director May 29, has given distance learning his full support.

"It's about transferring skills. We are going to fundamentally change the way we train soldiers in the next few years," he told 120 state representatives at the Army Guard's distance learning conference last April.

Schultz also acknowledged that distance learning cannot replace all forms of training.

"There is a point where we want to put soldiers in tents and go down range," he said.

Bond, however, believes soldiers can achieve higher levels of readiness through a combination of resident training and distance learning.

Although he is not an Apache pilot, Bond flew helicopters in Vietnam and he earned the distinction as a standardization instructor pilot who has trained and evaluated other aviation instructors. That makes him one of the Army Guard's top guns.

Through distance learning, he explained, aviator trainees can be taught such things as pre-

flight procedures and aircraft systems before attending a resident course. That means spending less time away from their homes. The savings in travel, pay and per diem would be substantial.

Improved student performance is another distance learning objective.

The Army Research Institute recently documented the results of the unit clerk educational program, said Bond. Eighty-five percent of the students passed a resident course. Ninety-two per-

cent passed a distance learning course.

The resident course for 20 students cost \$54,000. The distance learning course for 88 students cost \$5,000.

As the distance learning program takes off, it promises to give the Guard a big bang for considerably fewer bucks.

For more information about the Army Guard's distance learning program visit their Web site at: www.ngb5.ngb.army.mil/tng/arngdl.htm

NEWS

MAKERS

Compiled by MSgt. John Malthaner
National Guard Bureau

Tennessee Army Guard CWO4 Phillip Hill was awarded one of the Drug Enforcement Agency's highest awards for valor recently by DEA Administrator Thomas Constantine and U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno.

The Administrator's Award For Valor is given to people who perform above and beyond the call of duty while serving with or in support of DEA operations.

While piloting a UH-1 Huey helicopter in support of the DEA's Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program in Van Buren County, Hill's aircraft sustained two engine explosions, causing a catastrophic failure of the engine. From an altitude of over 1,000 feet, Mr. Hill was able to crash land the doomed craft.

While the aircraft was destroyed, Hill's courage and expertise in the face of mortal danger were cited for ensuring that the nine passengers and crew escaped serious injury or death. Officers with the Connecticut State Police, the Connecticut National Guard and the DEA were on board.

Hill is a member of the 4th Squadron, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment.

A 37-year old Italian sailor aboard a 55-foot sailboat is alive thanks to the heroic efforts of pararescuemen with the New York Air Guard's 106th Rescue Wing based at Gabreski Airport in Westhampton Beach.

Located nearly 1,000 miles east of Bermuda, MSgt. Steven Arrigotti, SSgt. Kenneth Smith and SSgt. Jeff Baker parachuted 3,500 feet in a free-fall to the boat shortly after midnight. They rescued Lucoviso Clerici, who was suffering from internal bleeding.

It was the third person saved by the unit during a recent three week period; a Portuguese fisherman was saved May 18; the following day the 106th helped rescue of a Russian fishing captain 200-miles off the coast of Iceland.

Since 1975, the unit has saved 275 people.

Members of the Ohio Air Guard's 179th Air-lift Wing in Mansfield added to their well-earned reputation for community involvement when they held a bone marrow drive recently.

The drive, hosted by the 179th's Aerial Port Squadron, was the brainchild of SSgt. Adrian Colosimo, who had read an article about the need for bone marrow donors.

After learning there was a need for a unit drive, he and SMSgt. Kathy Cyphert, his section supervisor, contacted the Department of Defense's Bone Marrow Center in Kensington, Md. The center places donors into the National Marrow Donor Registry.

The DoD center also sent everything from syringes and gloves to a bone marrow drive coordinator. "The only cost to the unit was for cookies," Cyphert reported.

More than 165 Buckeye airmen and women participated in the 10-minute procedure, which consisted of filling out some paperwork and giving a vial of blood. That information is sent to the National Registry where the blood is typed and donors and recipients are matched.



CWO4 Phillip Hill (right) is honored by DEA Chief, Thomas Constantine, and Attorney General Janet Reno.



Ohio's SSgt. Adrian Colosimo (right) gives blood at his unit's bone marrow drive.



Daedalian Maintenance Award winners: the California Air Guard 163rd Air Refueling Wing's Logistics Group.

The California Air Guard 163rd Air Refueling Wing's Logistics Group has earned the U.S. Air Force's Daedalian Maintenance Award, recognizing them as the top medium aircraft maintainers in the Air Guard.

The Group also won the Air Guard's Maintenance Effectiveness Award.

The unit was recognized for its 100 percent "mission effectiveness" rating while supporting real world deployments like Operations Decisive Endeavor, Tandem Thrust and Decisive Guard. The 163rd, based at March Air Reserve Base, also was honored for serving their community, its charitable programs and their support of the Employer Support Program.

Some of those programs included:

- Partnership for Peace: Conducted numerous visits to and from Ukraine -- the former Soviet republic -- to foster international relations.
- Established "Unit Pride," a program that dedicates a unit aircraft to a different community.
- Conducted spouse, civic and employer support flights to educate others about their mission.

Virginia Army Guard SGM Gareth Hilton, assigned to the 29th Infantry Division at Fort Belvoir, helped rescue a drowning victim in Cleveland, Ohio, recently.

Hilton, a full-time member of the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department, was visiting the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, when he observed a crew member on a passing ship frantically waving and yelling in the water.

Hilton and others quickly formed a human chain to reach the man.

"I looked in the water and saw a guy that looked like he had swim fins on," Hilton said. "I realized his jogging pants were around his ankles and his wrists were tied to his neck with a shoelace." Carrying a knife, Hilton freed the man.

Once out of the water, they conducted first aid.

Hilton has served in all three components of the Army. He joined the Army in 1970 and served with the 82nd Airborne Division for two years. He then joined the Reserve's 11th Special Forces Group, where he served part-time until 1994. He then joined the Virginia Army Guard's 3rd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group. Hilton is currently the sergeant major of the Division Tactical Action Center.

Two members of the Nevada Air Guard's 152nd Airlift Wing in Reno -- MSgt. James Lorenz and SMSgt. Steven Ingersoll -- were selected the 1998 Air National Guard Retention Office Manager of the Year, and the ANG's Unit Career Advisor of the Year, respectively.

Massachusetts Air Guard TSgt. Pete Johnson, a recruiter for the 102nd Fighter Wing, won a trio of awards recently.

Johnson was a distinguished graduate (top 10 percent) of the 1st Air Force Noncommissioned Officers Academy at Tyndall AFB, Fla. He also received the Commandant's Award.

Johnson also was named his state's Production Recruiter of the Year, recruiting 44 people.

BACK FROM BOSNIA

Virginia's Charlie Company,
3-116th Infantry does its
forefathers proud

Triumphant RETURN

By MSgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

The gods of peace and some ghosts of war smiled on Charlie Company in the northern Virginia town of Leesburg on the first Saturday in June.

It was a pristine day, perfect for an outdoor ceremony, when 144 Virginia Army National Guardsmen from C Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry, accepted their medals and took their bows for the year they committed to keeping the peace in distant, war-torn Bosnia.

It was June 6, the 54th anniversary of honor and sorrow for northern Virginia families who lost husbands, brothers and sons when the National Guard's 29th Infantry Division spearheaded the D-Day assault on Omaha Beach in 1944.

A lot of good men from that division died on that bloody beach in Normandy, one of the places that marked the beginning of the end for Adolf Hitler's Third Reich and mankind's most devastating war.

Those ghosts were at Leesburg's spacious Ida Lee Park on that Saturday because the 116th's three battalions led the 29th into the fray.

And everyone could smile because all 144 peacekeepers had come safely home from their duties on the Sava River after becoming the first National Guard infantry outfit sent into harm's way since Indiana Rangers had deployed to Vietnam 30 years earlier.

Fifty-five Saturdays after Charlie Company reported to the Leesburg armory to begin preparing for the NATO mission, the Virginia Guard, Loudoun County and the Town of Leesburg honored their own.

The tributes took many forms for the men who are part of the "Stonewall Brigade" made famous in July 1861 during the First Battle of Bull Run.

"You're part of a proud heritage," said U.S. Senator Charles Robb who thanked them for a job well done.

"You are probably better because you have served," observed Congressman Frank Wolf who has visited Bosnia six times. "But Bosnia is better and the world



Photos by MSgt. Bob Haskell

LOVED IN LEESBURG - Company C's SSgt. Robert Smolar (left), with roots in the former Yugoslavia, shares his thoughts with Maj. Gen. Roger Schultz, Army Guard director. Infantrymen (above) march before hometown fans. Capt. Michael Patterson (below), Company C commander, addresses the crowd and the media.



is safer because of the efforts of you and men like you. There is reason for hope."

"You didn't complain. You didn't gripe. You didn't go to Canada," cracked Maj. Gen. Carroll Childers, the 29th Division's commander.

"In the spirit of those soldiers who rushed the beaches of Normandy, you have carried on the tradition of being first," praised Maj. Gen. Carroll Thackston, Virginia's adjutant general, after presenting every man with a Virginia National Guard Commendation Medal.

He also pinned Meritorious Service Medals on Capt. Michael Patterson, the company commander, and 1st Sgt. Bennie Dancy.

"No commander ever had better soldiers," said Patterson. "Not one man before me let me down."

Everyone thanked the families, the friends of families and the employers for carrying on while the infantry citizen-soldiers trained at Fort Benning, Ga., and Fort Polk, La., and kept the rebuilt bridge over the Sava and the Task Force Pershing

base camp in Croatia secure for NATO forces from last November until they left on April 16.

Maj. Gen. Roger Schultz, the new director of the Army National Guard, quietly made his presence known by quizzing many of the men about their mission and any problems they have encountered since coming home.

And veterans benefits advocate Claudius Lehmann, 63, of nearby Ashburn expressed his gratitude by showing up in a military police khaki uniform like the one he wore while serving in the Army in the mid-50s.

"Our country has to take care of everyone who has been involved in a foreign conflict," he insisted.

"It was what I imagined it would be," said SSgt. Robert Smolar who planned to return to his job as a civil engineer with the U.S. State Department on the Monday after the Saturday ceremony. "The successful execution of a mundane duty means staying focused and not becoming complacent."

A third of the force was on duty all of

the time, Patterson pointed out. The company logged 29,000 accident-free miles while patrolling the region.

"Watching videos, working out and eating ice cream," were ways the men whiled away their down time during the mild winter, said Smolar.

Mundane was what everyone hoped the mission would be. No one wanted bloodshed.

Loudoun County reveres its soldiers. A statue, green with age, of a Confederate infantryman in a slouch hat and thumb on the hammer of his musket, stands tall in front of the old courthouse in downtown Leesburg. A much more modern statue of George C. Marshall stands nearby. Its plaque proclaims that he lived there while serving as Army chief of staff, Secretary of State, and Secretary of Defense; while winning the Nobel Peace Prize.

Patterson's peacekeepers have now joined that fraternity of warriors. Dale Polen-Myers, chairwoman of the board of supervisors, announced that "June 6 will forever be Charlie Company Day in Loudoun County."



STATES

• Delaware Dike • 400 Years Old • Keystone Twisters

DELAWARE

Shake, rattle and roll.

That could have been the theme for 45 Army Guardmembers of the newly-formed 160th Engineer Company, who recently performed their two-week annual training at the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal realigning a dike at the new Route 1 bridge.

"The original dike was cut out during the construction of the new bridge, leaving a 1,150 foot gap just west of the new bridge. Our mission is to rebuild the fourth wall of the dike so that it can be used as a dredge disposal area," said Capt. Fred Cost, company commander.

The entire project is expected to take a year to complete.

"I'm real glad to be out here on the worksite repairing the equipment instead of being in the armory and reading the manual," said PFC James Chandler.

NEVADA

The 152nd Airlift Wing retired its two C-130 Pacer Coin aircraft recently, ending an era of photo reconnaissance missions.

Pacer Coin is a day/night all-weather reconnaissance and surveillance aircraft that can provide intelligence support to commanders. It has been used to support special operations forces and counterdrug activities.

CALIFORNIA



Photo by SSgt. Dan Bowen

GASSED by GRIZZLIES

A KC-135 Stratotanker from the 163rd Air Refueling Wing, based at March Air Reserve Base, refuels a French Jaguar in support of Operation Deliberate Guard. Nearly 130 Grizzlies recently spent two weeks at Istres AB, France, maintaining and refueling NATO aircraft tasked to keep the peace over Bosnia.

NEW MEXICO

A delegation from Spain, led by first Vice President Francisco Alvarez-Cascos, visited Santa Fe to participate in commemoration of Cuarto Centenario, the 400 year anniversary of the first Spanish settlement in the United States and the National Guard, the oldest continuously organized militia in the nation.



Maj. Gen. Melvyn Montano (left) welcomed the Onate statue in Santa Fe.

The first permanent settlement was established by Don Juan de Onate in July 1598, nine years prior to the English settlement of Jamestown in 1607.

A statue of Onate was unveiled a

National Guard headquarters.

Guard and Spanish soldiers also participated in a 300-mile relay run -- from El Paso, Texas to Santa Fe -- along the historic El Camino Real (Royal Road), a road that once provided missionary supplies, commerce, livestock and cultural exchange in addition to a means for military campaigns.

PENNSYLVANIA



Photo courtesy of the Pennsylvania National Guard

NO ONE HOME - Pennsylvania Army Guard Sgt. Tim Evans helps with search and rescue operations in Lake Carey.

Gus Garlitz stood in what was once his two-story log home, perched on a hill overlooking the picturesque village of Salisbury. Hit by a tornado, now only the floorboards and devastation remained.

"It took 13 seconds to destroy what took me 13 years to build," said the still-shaken Garlitz.

Conventional wisdom puts the rolling terrain of Pennsylvania off limits to most tornado tracks, but from May 31 to June 2, 22 twisters struck the state.

The final toll: five deaths; scores of injuries; 2,000 buildings damaged or destroyed; and millions of dollars in property damage.

The twisters also brought a swift response from nearly 170 Keystone State soldiers and airmen.

The Guard's first priority was search and rescue. Working with state police, they also helped keep roadways clear for utility crews, and provided a deterrent for looters.

In Salisbury, 201st RED HORSE engineers haul-

ed hundreds of loads of debris to a landfill. Armed with four dump trucks, the nine airmen had seen this before, deploying in support of past hurricane relief efforts in Florida and Guam.

Inside one of the trucks, TSgt. Chip Koons bounced lightly in his seat as the frontend loader compacted the debris on his 20-ton vehicle.

"The last time I was called to state active duty was to help replenish the state's depleted highway salt supply," he recalled. "We did a good job then, and we're doing a good job now."

That same sense of quiet pride inspired Koons' "brothers" in the Army Guard as well.

"Nobody likes a disaster," noted the 55th Brigade's SFC Richard Parry, a 19-year veteran. "But if it happens, we're glad to help."

"A mission like this gives us a real sense of belonging," he added. "It just makes you feel worthwhile -- of value to the community."



HISTORY

• Portrait of a National Guard Hero

THE LAST HERO

New York lawyer 'Wild Bill' Donovan left his life of privilege to become a WWI hero and father of the present day CIA

When "Wild Bill" Donovan died in 1959, President Dwight D. Eisenhower called him our nation's "last hero." The New York Guardsman earned Eisenhower's praise for his courageous exploits during World War I. The grandson of poor Irish immigrants also was credited with founding the prototype of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) during World War II.

William J. Donovan was born in Buffalo, N.Y., in 1883. He returned to his birthplace after graduating from Columbia Law School in 1907. But practicing law, he discovered, lacked excitement. So in 1912, Donovan joined other wealthy young men to found Troop I, New York Cavalry.

He quickly became the Troop's captain, and in 1914, led the unit during a potentially violent railroad strike. Two years later, Troop I was mobilized for Mexican Border duty. It was there that Donovan picked up the nickname "Wild Bill" for driving his men as hard as he drove himself.

After Troop I returned from the border in March 1917 — as America was about to enter World War I — Donovan was called to New York City to become Executive Officer of the 1st Battalion, 69th New York Infantry. These were the "Fighting Irish" of Civil War fame, the pride of Irish Americans everywhere.

Following their induction into Federal service in August 1917, many of the regiment's NCOs and enlisted men turned down the chance to become officers rather than transfer out. When the 69th was renumbered the 165th U.S. Infantry and placed in the all-Guard 42nd "Rainbow" Division with regiments from Alabama, Iowa, and Ohio, its identity as an Irish regiment from New York City remained intact.

The Fighting Irish arrived in France on Nov. 11, 1917, exactly one year before the war's end. The 42nd was one of the first U.S. divisions to enter combat.

By July 1918, Lt. Col. Donovan was commanding the 165th Infantry's first battalion. Leading the division's assault across the Ourcq River, the regiment was surrounded on three sides by a strong German counterattack. They managed to hold, but 600 out of 1,000 soldiers with Donovan's lead battalion were

either killed, wounded or missing. Donovan was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross (second only to the Medal of Honor for recognizing bravery in combat) for his actions that day. The medal, he insisted, was not as important to him as was his soldier's respect of his battlefield prowess.

"I would ask them to do nothing that I myself would not do," he said. "This one tribute is greater than any honor my superior officers can give me."

Three months later, Donovan was honored again with a second DSC, this time for refusing evacuation after his leg was shattered by a machine gun bullet — in 1922 this would be upgraded to the Medal of Honor.

Donovan was a full colonel commanding the regiment, and recuperating from his injuries, by the time the Fighting Irish arrived home in April 1919. During the ecstatic victory parade down New York City's 5th Avenue, Donovan elected to walk rather than ride the horse to which his rank entitled him.

When the troops worried that their relatives would not recognize them beneath their steel helmets, Donovan



"I ask that this medal remain in the armory, to serve as a recognition of the valor of the regiment, but most of all, as a memorial to our brave and unforgotten dead"

WILLIAM J. DONOVAN
Medal of Honor recipient

told them, "They're not going to see your faces, but they'll never forget what you looked like."

Two years as a crime-fighting District Attorney in Buffalo led to Donovan's 1924 run for Lieutenant Gov-



GUARD HISTORY

By Renee Hylton
Army Guard Historian

ernor. Irish Catholic Republicans like Donovan were rare in the 1920s, and the Democrats used his National Guard strike duty against him. "Wild Bill" lost narrowly. He then went to Washington D.C., working several posts in the Justice Department.

The election of Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt to the White House in 1932 ended Donovan's hopes for a Cabinet position, but he continued to serve his country as an unofficial observer of military and political "hot spots" all over the globe.

In 1940, with the U.S. mobilizing for war, Roosevelt sent Donovan on several secret intelligence missions. In July 1941 the government's intelligence-gathering capability was centralized as

the "Office of the Coordinator of Information," or COI, with Donovan as its head. After Pearl Harbor the COI became the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Donovan, who returned to active duty with a Reserve rank of Brigadier General, remained as its director.

Before World War II, spying was not considered an occupation for gentlemen — or for governments run by gentlemen. Donovan was so ethical in both his personal and professional life that J. Edgar Hoover's Federal Bureau of Investigation — renowned for its ability to gather dirt — could find no skeletons in his closet.

"Wild Bill" Donovan made espionage respectable.

At the war's end, Donovan received a second star, but when the OSS was recreated as the Central Intelligence Agency in 1947, he was not selected as its first head. Although President Harry Truman and Donovan were former Guardsmen and World War I veterans, the two did not like one another. Truman was not a college graduate and had cultivated a "homespun" image. In contrast, Donovan was the grandson of poor immigrants who had made himself into an educated, cultured and wealthy man.

Donovan served as Ambassador to Thailand in 1953-54, and on several private diplomatic missions in the years that followed. But in 1956 his government career came to an end. Tragically, the next year, he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease. "Wild Bill" deteriorated rapidly; he died in 1959 and was buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery.

William J. Donovan is today best remembered as the father of American intelligence, but it was his career as a soldier that made his later work possible. The men who served under him, whether on the battlefield or in the OSS, were fanatically devoted to Donovan.

As one former OSS agent put it, "He took care of his men."

That selfless attitude was in evidence in 1922 when Donovan rejected the Medal of Honor for himself. Instead, he accepted it on behalf of the entire 165th Infantry.

As he told his fellow "Fighting Irish" assembled in the 69th Regiment Armory that day: "This medal was truly won by the entire command ... and I ask that this medal remain in the armory, to serve as a recognition of the valor of the regiment, but most of all, as a memorial to our brave and unforgotten dead."



TRAINING



'Guardlifts' keep many Air Guard units, like Maryland's 175th Wing, ready for war

Frequent FLIERS

By MSgt. Gary Gault
Maryland National Guard

As the strained twangy wailings of Willie Nelson's "On the road again; just can't wait to be on the road again" was piped in over the intercom of a C-130E — musically marking the start of another mission — SrA. Paul Mezzanotte cringed.

While Nelson's mid-80s anthem has become a call-to-arms for those nomadically-inclined, Mezzanotte — a guitarist in civilian life — would sooner tap a toe to radio static.

"I don't much care for country music," confessed the Maryland Air Guard 175th Wing loadmaster as the cargo hauler he was aboard pulled away from an airstrip at their home on Martin State Airport in Baltimore.

"But," he added with a resigned nod to Nelson, "it is good to be on the road again."

For those aircrews that serve in the Air National Guard, Mezzanotte's observation and Nelson's nasally notes ring true. Since 1964 citizen-airmen and soldiers have been hitching rides — or "Guardlifts" as they have been come to be known — to annual training and exercises via Air Guard cargo planes. That year, almost 17,000 Guardmembers thumbred rides.

Last year alone, Air Guard crews logged nearly 32,500 hours, moved 18,600 tons of equipment and carried more than



Photos by MSgt. Gary Gault

117,000 Guard people.

LT Col. Ron James, the 175th's Operations Support Flight commander, foresees busier times ahead.

"Guardlift is one of our primary missions in the Air National Guard," he reported.

James added that his unit averages about 1,500 air hours annually. That translates into launching two to three aircraft per week-end and one aircraft during the week. It also requires his crews, on average, to be away from home for two to three days.

"About one-quarter of our missions are for airlift," he said. "The rest are for local training requirements, Joint Airborne Air Transportability Training and real world operations and contingencies."

Newspapers headlines often provide Maryland crews with an azimuth to their next real world mission.

They have flown humanitarian missions in Somalia (Operations Restore Hope and Provide Relief), Rwanda (Support Hope), Sarajevo (Provide Promise) and Turkey (Provide Comfort II). The 175th also has supported United Nations' troops in Bosnia (Deny Flight and Joint Guard) and during the Persian Gulf War.

Currently, the airlift squadron's efforts assist military forces safeguarding the no-fly zone over Iraq (Operations Northern and Southern Watch). They also have opened their back doors to paratroopers from several foreign nations — many of them from the former Soviet Union — supporting the annual joint service NATO exercise, Baltic Challenge. Their efforts at last year's "Challenge" in Estonia drew raves reviews from a high-ranking general in NATO's Army European Command, and an invitation to Lithuania this



ON THE ROAD AGAIN - After completing a mission, a Maryland crewmember (top page) heads for a well-earned rest. 1st Lt. Gary Bernard (above), a co-pilot, prefers 'Guardlifts' to Uganda.

month — the site of this year's exercise.

"What is often routine, such as these 'Guardlift' missions," observed James, who has logged more than 8,000 flying hours and 24 years service with the Maryland Air Guard, "is training for war and real world operations."

On this particular "Guardlift" to Tyndall AFB, Fla., Mezzanotte and crew loaded equipment earmarked for the Oregon Air Guard's 142nd Fighter Wing in Portland.

The flight to Tyndall was uneventful and moderately short, only three hours. A stark contrast to a recent mission 1st Lt. Gary Bernard, a co-pilot, had flown to wartorn Entebbe, Uganda.

"I have always thought that it would be interesting seeing Africa," he recalled somberly. "The evidence of war and the stench of death were everywhere... burned out buildings, wreckage and misery were everywhere you looked. I was really glad to get the heck out of there."

"It makes these routine missions seem good by comparison," he added.

The ramp at Tyndall provided just a

OFF LOAD - Maryland's SrA. Paul Mezzanotte guides a 'K-loader' to the back of a C-130E.

small sample of what Guard fliers call "routine." As 175th Wingers awaited their cargo and passengers, fighter pilots from Iowa's 185th Fighter Wing and Oregon's 142nd, flying F-16 and F-15 jets, roared into the afternoon skies. An Air Guard C-141 crew from Tennessee's 164th Airlift Wing and C-130 fliers from West Virginia's 167th Airlift Wing were also in Florida. They, too, were supporting the Portland Guardlift.

Just down the ramp, cargo haulers with New York's 109th Airlift Wing loaded their C-130 with equipment and passengers, all

headed for Sioux City — home to the 185th.

As the evening drew near, punctuated by a large apricot moon, Mezzanotte got busy tying down two huge steel boxes, a pallet and a jet engine. The cargo took 4-1/2 hours to reach the 175th's C-130. The Maryland crew had the 155,000-pound load strapped in place inside 20 minutes.

175th flight engineer and rocket scientist, SSgt. Christine Lang (Fisher by recent marriage) ensured the aircraft was safe to fly and properly fueled.

"That should be enough to get us to the West Coast," Lang commented after calculating the C-130's fuel needs with pen and brain. "All we have to do is load passengers and take off tomorrow."

The early morning brought clear skies and a busload of 142nd maintainers.

"We've been here for two weeks keeping our F-15s flying," noted MSgt. Mike Martin, a member of the Portland unit's maintenance squadron. "The fighters have been using the missile range here."

The 18 Oregon jet fixers knew their seven hour flight was close to home when they spied Mount Hood's snow-covered volcanic cinder cone.

On the ground at Portland Air Base, 142nd F-15 Eagles screamed overhead as its maintainers disembarked and Maryland crew members handed off their cargo to 142nd aerial port professionals. The Air Guard crews from Tennessee and West Virginia followed suit.

"We'll climb to 30,000 feet and catch the tailwinds back to Martin State Airport in maybe six hours," informed 175th pilot Maj. Dave Woodworth, preparing for takeoff.

As the 175th crew headed east, closing the book on another successful "Guardlift" chapter, Willie Nelson's ode to travel again crackled over the intercom.

This time, Paul Mezzanotte smiled.