

## IN THE NEWS

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# THE ON GUARD

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May 1997

## Hessert named Deputy IG

■ *Maine Air Guard commander's selection called 'extremely unusual'*

By MSgt. Bob Haskell  
National Guard Bureau

**D**essert with an H," Brig. Gen. Wilfred Hessert tells people, is how to spell his family name.

Members of the active Air Force community can expect to spell the name of that Air National Guard general from Maine with increasing frequency beginning May 1.

That is when Hessert, 54, begins his new job as Deputy Inspector General of the U.S. Air Force. He will become the first Air Guard member in history to take on one of the 50-year-old parent service's premier administrative positions.

"Is this wing ready to go to war?" will be among Hessert's world-wide responsibilities, explained Maj. Laura Feldman, an Air Force spokesperson who called the appointment "extremely unusual."

Hessert was selected by Secretary of the Air Force Sheila Widnall and Gen. Ronald Fogleman, Air Force Chief of Staff. Historically, the appointment is considered as significant for the Air Guard as Jackie Robinson's debut in 1947 was for major league baseball.

"I thought I had died and gone to heaven when I got the job in Europe. But this is unbelievable," Hessert said.

"We will do the best we can to ensure the combat readiness of our forces," added

the man who, as a major general, will also oversee a staff dealing with such concerns as promotions, hazing and sexual harassment, and fraud, waste and abuse.

After five years as commander of the Maine Air Guard's 101st Air Refueling Wing, Hessert had spent the winter settling into his new part-time position as special assistant to the commander of the U.S. Air Forces in Europe.

His selection was motivated by a decision to include members of the Air Guard in Air Force leadership positions, Feldman said.

"This is our chief's emphasis on total force," she added. "We fight side-by-side."

Last October, for example, Lt. Col. John Hennigan became the first active Army officer to assume command of a National Guard unit since World War II. He took over the Louisiana Army Guard's 1st Battalion, 141st Field Artillery.

Hessert has served in the Maine Air Guard for 34 years, following a three-year hitch in the Army. He began flying jet fighters in 1967. He has since become a KC-135 tanker pilot.

He was promoted to brigadier general in 1993. He became the driving force behind the 10-plane 101st's role as host of the Northeast Tanker Task Force that channels virtually all Air Force and North Atlantic Treaty Organization flights to Europe and back through the northeast corridor.

"We've been on alert for everything you've read about last year," he reported.

Now, Hessert has been alerted to report to the Pentagon to take on matters critical for keeping the Air Force combat ready.



"We will ensure the combat readiness of our forces."

Brig. Gen. Wilfred Hessert



Photo by Maj. Paul Fanning

## FACE LIFTING

Soldiers with the New York Army Guard's Company B, 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation hook-up a sling from a hovering UH-60 Blackhawk to an abandoned car. The ecologically-minded Islip-based unit has airlifted more than two dozen cars from a wooded area in Central Pine Barrens.





## COMMENTARY

• Soldier's Medal • Affirmative Action • St. Patrick's Day

## ABOUT the PAPER

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## Mailing Address:

NGB-PAI-C  
2500 Army Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20310-2500

## Express Mail Address:

NGB-PAI-C  
Park Center IV, Suite 450  
4501 Ford Ave.  
Alexandria VA 22302-1454

## Phone/FAX Numbers:

(703) 681-0716  
DSN 761-0716  
FAX: (703) 681-0732/0731

## E-Mail:

jmalthan@ngb-emh2.army.mil

## NGB Home Page:

<http://www.dtic.mil/defenseink/guardlink/>

## STAFF



Chief, National Guard Bureau  
Lt. Gen. Edward D. Baca

Chief, Public Affairs  
Daniel Donohue

Editor  
MSgt. John Malthaner

Senior Correspondent  
MSgt. Bob Haskell

## GUARD MAIL

## AFFIRMATIVE DISMAY

*I was dismayed to see your article in the March issue titled "Affirmative Action pushed."*

The U.S. military is a shining example of how promotion on merit, not race, is working and has been for decades.

The military should be used as an example for the rest of society that governmental regulations are not needed to ensure that the most qualified are promoted. The military is a place that any person from any background can succeed solely by working hard and continuing to improve themselves both mentally and physically.

I resent William E. Leftwich III -- a political appointee -- for using a meeting of National Guard soldiers to push the ideals of his political party.

We need to continue to promote only on merit and ensure equal access for all soldiers by enforcing the military code of ethics and punishing those who display racist actions.

Capt. Douglas R. Hurst  
Tennessee National Guard

## HEROIC EXCEPTION

*I was reading the February issue of The On Guard and read a story about a California Guardmember who earned the Soldier's Medal. One of the facts in the article stated that he was only the second person in history to earn the*

award. Not to take anything away from this soldier, but he was not the second person in Guard history. However, he may have been the second California Guardmember.

In 1993, four members of the New York Army Guard's 1st Squadron, 101st Cavalry were awarded the Soldier's Medal for climbing into a U-8 that crashed into our flight line at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pa., during our annual training. Our members climbed into a burning aircraft and pulled both unconscious aircrew members out of the plane and administered first aid until medical help arrived on the scene.

Capt. Daniel U. Golinski  
Pennsylvania National Guard



GREEN DAY - New Yorkers line parade route to honor St. Patrick, their local National Guard.

## A DAY IN GREEN

*I am writing to tell you about the New York Army Guard's Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Aviation Brigade's participation in the 32nd Annual St. Patrick's Day parade in Patchogue, N.Y.*

It was our fifth year taking part in one of the largest parades in Long Island with more than 5,000 spectators cheering us.

The community knows us very well. You see, we have been in the lime-light for the past two years. Our company was activated last July to support

TWA Flight 800. Six months prior, we were called-up for the Blizzard of '96. Six months prior to that we were activated for the great Westhampton fires.

As the NCO-in-charge of the parade, I have tried to outdo the year before.

This year was no exception. Our group led off with a humvee, followed by a tractor and a lowboy trailer carrying an armored personnel carrier. They were followed by a 2-1/2 ton truck, mounted 50-calibre machine gun and five-ton wrecker. Two soldiers were in each vehicle with two additional soldiers walking along side.

A recruiter, SFC Jineen Bacalla, also set up at a recruiting stand at the center of the parade route.

We do our best to keep up good community relations.

Sgt. Carl Vecchio Jr.  
New York National Guard

## LETTERS POLICY:

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. FAX Letters to the Editor to DSN 761-0732/0731 or (703) 681-0732. Letters may be mailed to: NGB-PAI-C 2500 Army Pentagon, Washington, DC 20310-2500.

## GUARD TOONS

By Lyle Farquhar



"Please forgive Corporal Boris, Sir, he's still unsure about how to address American officers."





## IN THE NEWS

• Female First • Mobility Moves • VA Benefits Handbook

## Keystone brigade has 'Wright' stuff

■ *Col. Jessica Wright becomes first woman to command brigade*

By SFC Dan Miller  
Pennsylvania National Guard

Col. Jessica L. Wright made history in Pennsylvania March 16, when she became the first woman to command a brigade in the Army National Guard.

Wright accepted command of the 28th Division Aviation Brigade from Col. Charles E. Martin during a ceremony held at Fort Indiantown Gap.

Wright has made history before. In March 1978 she became the Army Guard's first woman pilot after graduating from the Officers Rotary Wing Aviator Course at Fort Rucker, Ala.

Wright is aware of the significance of her recent selection. However, she feels less a pioneer today, than 20 years ago.

"Now, they tell me 'you're one of the guys.' So I feel more accepted," she explained. "This tells me they know you fly like they do and you soldier like they do."

Wright was born Nov. 2, 1952, in Monessen, Pa. She enlisted in the Pennsylvania Army Guard in 1975 after graduating from Alderson Broaddus College in Fillipi,

W. Va., with a bachelor's degree in social work. She has since earned a master's degree in management from Webster University in St. Louis.

After completing journalism training at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Ind., Wright entered the Womens' Army Corps Officer Orientation/Officer Candidate School at Fort McClellan, Ala. Once commissioned, she got branch qualified in the adjutant general corps.

It was at that time, she decided to become a pilot.

"I had no clue (any women had done it before). 'I just wanted to do something fun. I wanted a challenge, and I didn't want to sit at a desk every day,' the colonel recalled.



"This tells me  
they know you fly like they do and you  
soldier like they do." Col. Jessica Wright

She knew becoming a pilot was "a long shot." Not because she was a woman, she explained, but because aviation positions "were hard to come by" at the time, regardless of sex.

However, the 44-year-old subscribes to one rule: "If it's easy, it's not worth having. If it's hard, there must be some benefit to having it."

Wright remembered "a lot of negative reaction" to her wanting to become

a pilot. That was further fueled when she failed her first check ride in a CH-54 Sky Crane in front of newspaper reporters with flowers and champagne awaiting her.

"It was devastating," she recalled, "but the important

■ See WRIGHT, Page 4

## Secretary Lee seeks pay cut relief for deployed troops

By MSgt. Bob Haskell  
National Guard Bureau

The quality of life for members of the National Guard and Reserves who get mobilized for active duty is a bull that Deborah Lee has grabbed by the horns.

Therefore, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs wants to resolve the problems that the new and nearly bankrupt Mobilization Insurance Program has created for many of America's nearly 11,000 citizen-soldiers called up for the Bosnian peacekeeping mission.

"I would suggest that within the next couple of months the troops who are owed money will be paid in full," Lee told members of the media covering the second annual Reserve Component Senior Leaders Conference in

Stuttgart, Germany.

"We are paying partial benefits to troops and have asked Congress for supplemental funds," she added. "So the troops will be paid their full benefits as soon as that supplement has been released."

The insurance program, defense officials have explained, was designed during the Persian Gulf War to bolster the military income of reserve troops called to active duty who had to work for less money than their civilian jobs paid.

However, those who have enrolled in the plan have not received their full benefits since being mobilized for Joint Endeavor and Joint Guard, because there has not been enough time to build up enough equity in that account.

Lee has become wise to the ways

of military personnel and compensation during the four years she has held her current post and as a staff member on the House Armed Services Committee. She also was an advisor to former Chairman Les Aspin before that.

Now she is looking for a long-range solution to the mobilization insurance situation before it creates a retention problem among reservists who have not received as much money as they anticipated.

"We are reviewing the overall program," she said. "We want to be sure that reservists do not start voting with their feet."

"Whether it's mobilization insurance or whether it's other programs for the future," she added, "you can be sure that 'quality of life' will continue to be a top agenda item."

## NATIONAL BRIEFS

## D.C. PILOT LANDS AIRCRAFT SAFELY, KOLLIGAN AWARD

Capt. Chris H. Rose, a District of Columbia Air National Guard fighter pilot, received the 1996 Koren Kolligan Jr. Trophy Award recently.

A member of the 121st Fighter Squadron at Andrews AFB, Md., Rose drew national attention last summer after gliding his F-16C fighting Falcon to an emergency landing following an in-flight engine failure. Rose was returning to Andrews from a training mission last June 27, when his aircraft had a flame-out at 13,000 feet. He was forced to land the fighter at Elizabeth City Coast Guard Station in North Carolina, some 15 miles from the point of engine failure.

The Kolligan Trophy recognizes the year's most meritorious handling of a serious in-flight emergency.

"Chris Rose is the epitome of the citizen-soldier," said Gen. Ronald Fogleman, Air Force Chief of Staff. "The event we are recognizing is one of those we often describe to aviators. Aviation is hours and hours of boredom interrupted by a few seconds of sheer terror and composure."

In the citation, Rose was credited with saving his life, the lives of others, and preventing the loss of a \$20 million jet.

"I've practiced this," Rose said. "Not the exact same situation, obviously, but my training really kicked in."

## VA PUBLISHES HANDBOOK

The latest edition of "Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents," one of the federal government's all-time best-selling publications, is now available from the U.S. Government Printing Office.

The 87-page handbook, published by the Department of Veterans Affairs, describes federal benefits for veterans and their family members, such as medical care, education, disability compensation, pension, life insurance and home loans.

Selling for \$5.50 a copy, the handbook is available for free via the Internet at: [www.va.gov/benefits.htm](http://www.va.gov/benefits.htm)

The Veterans Administration also offers VA-Online, a bulletin board that can be reached by modem at 1(800) 871-8387.

For copies, ask for GPO stock number 051-000-00212-1 from the Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250-76954. To order with VISA or Mastercard call (202) 512-1800.



## IN THE NEWS

## WRIGHT

From Page 3

thing is you get up and you go out again.

"Nerves can overtake you sometimes," she added. "You learn how to control that and march forward."

Today, Wright says she is "absolutely honored" to command the 28th Division's Aviation Brigade, a 1,700-strong unit based mostly in Pennsylvania, with units in West Virginia and California.

"You don't ever get to this juncture by yourself," she noted. "There are people that got me here, through mentorship, guidance and support."

She said her top priorities will be to maintain brigade strength and to keep the unit "extremely relevant" in a time of keen competition for defense resources.

"If we continue to put ourselves on the map (as we did under Col. Martin)," Wright said, "We're only headed for success."

Wright is qualified to fly the UH-1 Huey, CH-47 Chinook and the CH-54. She is also a graduate of the Medical Service Corps Officer Advanced Course, Command and General Staff College and the Army Management Staff College.

Her previous assignments in the Pennsylvania Army Guard have included serving as a UH-1 and CH-47 pilot for the 228th Aviation Company; 28th Aviation Battalion adjutant; 1028th Transportation Company flight operations platoon commander; and the Eastern Army National Guard Aviation Training Site's assistant operations, training and flight operations officer.

Since 1986, Wright has worked full time for the Army Guard. Most recently, she served at the National Guard Bureau as the Army Guard's chief of personnel services. Before assuming command of the 28th, Wright became an Army War College Military Fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C.

## Guard called to rescue North Dakota

*'At night it's ghostly. It's like night of the living dead'*

By MSgt. Bob Haskell  
National Guard Bureau

Brad Kitzman was primarily interested in medieval history while majoring in that discipline at a western North Dakota university a few years ago. In April he was up to his waist in the flooded Red River of the North that made some ugly contemporary history along his state's eastern border.

Kitzman, 28, is a staff sergeant in the North Dakota Army National Guard that marshaled thousands of citizen-soldiers to help their people combat and then cope with the worst flooding in the Peace Garden State's recorded history.

Army and Air Guard members, with an army of volunteers from across two states, bent their backs and their heavy equipment into the natural force that cut a 10-mile swath of devastation north along the North Dakota and Minnesota border.

SFC Douglas Friez, North Dakota's Director of Emergency Management, came home April 23 from Bosnia where he was serving on the Joint Guard peacekeeping force with an Army Guard public affairs detachment and where he had anxiously monitored the flood afflicting his state.

"It was gut wrenching," said Friez who returned to North Dakota following a chance meeting in Bosnia with Brig. Gen. John Meyer Jr., the Army's Chief of Public Affairs.

"This is the most serious disaster I have been personally involved in," said Friez, a 23-year veteran of emergency management. "Now we need to put all of our energies together to help reduce the hardship."

"I'm in awe. I've never seen a flood like this before," said Kitzman, a full-time Guard NCO who was on duty in Grand Forks, N.D. "At night it's ghostly. It's like the night of the living dead."

Kitzman experienced that sensation while driving a five-ton truck through flood waters that frequently reached the high headlights to evacuate people from homes that many did not want to leave until the rapidly rising waters left them no choice.

Up to 95 percent of the city's 50,000 residents were forced from their homes when the normally narrow and tranquil Red River reached 53.7 feet, an unforeseen 26 feet above flood stage, and surged through sandbag dikes into the city's streets after midnight April 19.

At the peak, two days later, flood waters were hammering the city at 112,000 cubic feet per second. The river's normal flow for April is less than 10,000 cubic feet per second, said a North Dakota Water Commission official.

The country has experienced more catastrophic flooding. Thousands of people were killed in the Johnstown, Pa., flood in 1889. And 50 people died during the 1993

National Guard engineers first hauled sand and sand bags to Fargo, N.D., and then Grand Forks where residents believed they could hold the rising river at bay.

Evacuations became the order of the day after the waters broke through the dikes.

The mission evolved into helping law enforcement agencies protect the city from looting and prevent anxious residents from returning to their homes until officials deemed it was safe.

"That's the most frustrating part of the job, telling people they can't return to their homes," said North Dakota Army Guard Lt. Col. Richard Balliet, the task force commander in Grand Forks.

As many as a thousand North Dakota Guardmembers a day were on duty along the flooded zone. Some had lost their own homes. Most were volunteers who spent as much time on state emergency active duty as they could spare from their full-time jobs, officials explained.

"Guardmembers are working tirelessly to preserve the property and lives of all North Dakotans, often while worrying about the safety of family and friends," observed Lesli Rucker, coordinating officer for the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Citizen-soldiers also hauled cattle carcasses, the gruesome debris from the severe winter, out of

lakes and streams to keep those water sources from being poisoned.

Minnesota has called up 2,400 Guard troops, expending more than 22,000 man days, to deal with the crisis in that state.

Less than 200 North Dakota troops, all water purification experts, were mobilized for the duration of the mission that Balliet estimated could last another four to six weeks while the region recovered.

It had already been a long winter for hundreds of Guardmembers who had helped North Dakota deal with the record 100 inches of snow and cold that had paralyzed the prairie and that brought on the flooding with the spring thaw.

The winter emergency, Operation Snowball, overlapped the spring emergency, Operation Good Neighbor, by two days in late March, said Air Guard Maj. Gen. Keith Bjerke, North Dakota's adjutant general who directed all of the state's military, police and civilian agencies involved in the crisis.



Photo by MSgt. Bob Haskell

**WADING IN - North Dakotan Army Guardmembers (above) drive a five-ton truck to their next mission.**

floods that caused an estimated \$12 billion in damage and left 70,000 people homeless in 10 midwestern states.

That was of little comfort to the victims in North Dakota and Minnesota.

A diabetic man who had been without insulin for three days and his wife and a man with two cats and a dog were among the dozen souls who Kitzman helped haul out of harm's way.

The Guard's mission took on many faces as the flood progressed steadily north toward Canada and covered an estimated three million acres of Minnesota and North Dakota farmland by the middle of the following week. The Red is one of the few rivers in the Northern Hemisphere that flows toward the north.

Water purification units began cleansing millions of gallons of river water for the Grand Forks AFB and for flushing out the city's contaminated water system.

See FLOODS, Page 11





## PEOPLE

• Asian/Pacific-American Heritage Month

## High on the 'Hog'

Maryland's Lt. Col. David Tanaka logs 3,000 hours in an A-10

By 1st Lt. Michele Jenkins  
Maryland National Guard

It seems they left an infinitesimal amount of room for the pilot.

You wonder then how anyone could tolerate such claustrophobic-conducive confines for an even hour.

Lt. Col. David Tanaka, an A-10 pilot with the Maryland Air Guard's 175th Wing, recently emerged from a Warthog cockpit after a training flight having logged 3,000 flying hours.

"I have been fortunate to fly my entire military career and to get some great flying assignments," Tanaka said.

Tanaka's interest in flying began as a child in Seattle, Wash.

"My father worked for Boeing and took me to work with him sometimes," he recalled. "I'd watch the planes land and take off."

The inside of an A-10 Thunderbolt II, affectionately referred to as the 'Warthog,' looks as though the designers had stuck in shoehorns. Once all of the switches and buttons were put in place,



Photo courtesy Maryland National Guard

So it was no surprise when Tanaka entered the University of Washington in 1978 on a four-year Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps scholarship. He graduated four years later with a degree in aeronautical/astronautical engineering.

After completing pilot training, Tanaka was picked to support "Project Season," a program that sent select Air Force pilots to Air Guard units to continue their training. He supported the program for three years, and then became an A-10 instructor pilot at Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz., from 1987 to 1989.

Tanaka separated from the Air Force in 1989. He then

3,000 HOURS - Maryland Air Guard's Lt. Col. David Tanaka (left), an A-10 pilot with the 175th Wing, recently logged 3,000 hours in a 'Warthog.'

returned to the Free State Air Guard based at Martin State Airport near Baltimore.

"The people brought me back to Maryland," he explained. "They had been great during Project Season."

As a full-time Guardmember, Tanaka sees the 175th's recent consolidation of C-130 and A-10 aircraft as an adjustment, but one that will produce dividends.

"While the two units functioned extremely well on their own," he explained, "there was a great deal of repetitiveness. It (the consolidation) has resulted in a more streamlined unit." Tanaka

added that the 175th's move is essential as the Air Guard becomes more involved with worldwide missions.

Some of Tanaka's 3,000 flying hours were flown over the perilous skies of Bosnia and supporting the no-fly zone over Iraq. He was also on the 1995 Air National Guard "Gunsmoke" team that placed second.

While most of the country will celebrate the accomplishments of Asian/Pacific Americans in May, Tanaka offers this.

"If I could pass on one bit of advice to anyone," he observed, "I would say, 'don't give up on your goals,' because consistency pays off."

By MSgt. Bob Haskell  
National Guard Bureau

Pastor Andrew Gibson contemplated the future of his many ministries from a pew of the cozy First Congregational Church in the quiet, mid-Maine town of Pittsfield.

The 35-year-old, who is also the chaplain for a Maine Army Guard engineer battalion, would be spending his last Sunday with his congregation before beginning a nine-month odyssey to Croatia to offer spiritual guidance for other soldiers supporting the 16-month-old Bosnian peacekeeping mission Joint Guard.

Gibson, sitting with his Nancy and daughter Kelly, the youngest of their three children, watched the service unfold as he considered his obligations.

Who would take over the church that he had guided for the past four and a half years? Who would watch over the 39 members of Maine's 133rd Engineer Battalion who also were being mobilized for peacekeeping duty in Bosnia? Who would minister to the needs of the citizen-sol-

## Following his CALL UP

Chaplain Andrew Gibson has work to do in Croatia

diers from that same battalion who were not deploying? Who would help look out for his family? Who ...?

Questions raced through his mind as young parishoners performed "Amazing Grace" on their flutes.

Maine Army Guard Chaplain (Capt.) Andrew Gibson was experiencing the anxieties felt by many other people -- doctors, teachers, political figures -- who are abruptly called away from their extended families.

On the flip side of his emotional coin, Gibson was anticipating the opportunity to serve in a strange and distant land, formerly called Yugoslavia.

"I'm very excited about doing it, knowing that I'll have to use

my soldier skills and that I'll be roughing it a bit," said Gibson, a native New Yorker who has been a Maine Army Guard chaplain for nearly five years.

"This is something we've all trained for, but some don't get a chance to use that training," he added. "This is an opportunity to do real chaplains work."

The main mission of the chaplains corps, that was formed at the request of Gen. George Washington, Gibson explained, is to protect the right of soldiers to express their religious beliefs.

"We also serve as our commander's conscience; to point out ethical and moral problems," Gibson added.

Gibson is one of a dozen Army Guard spiritual leaders -- commissioned chaplains and enlisted chaplains assistants -- from Maine to Oregon who recently reported to Bosnia, Croatia, Hungary and Germany to help perpetuate the peacekeeping process during its second year.

He is bringing a lot of energy to his military duties, according

to one of Gibson's parishioners.

"This church couldn't afford a full-time minister when Andy Gibson came here," said Sharon Mack, *Bangor Daily News* bureau chief who has attended Gibson's services for four years.

"First there were six people at a service. Then 10. Then 20. Now there are two services every Sunday morning because the church can't hold everybody," she added. "He can take a passage from ancient, historical scripture and make it funny and current and relate it to your life."

"And, sometimes," Mack added, "when he raises his arms for the benediction, you can see his combat boots under his robe because he has to run off to some Guard thing."

"The way he talks about the Guard people in his sermons, you can tell these are not people who Andy merely ministers to. They are part of his family."

Unless God works in another mysterious way, Gibson vows to return to Pittsfield.

"We stayed because the people kept us here," he said of his family's ties to the Maine community. "I promised the church I will come back."



Photo by MSgt. Bob Haskell

ANSWERING HIS CALL - Chaplain (Capt.) Andrew Gibson (above) left his Pittsfield, Maine church to minister to troops supporting Joint Guard.



## NEW HORIZONS UPDATE

Ahead of schedule, the Western Hemisphere's largest humanitarian exercise charges on

## Completion on 'HORIZON'

By MSgt. Bob Haskell  
National Guard Bureau

**M**emo to astronomers and historians in A.D. 4,397: When the Comet Hale-Bopp last passed this way in 1997, military men and women from the United States of America were working to make the tiny nation of Belize a better place.

Many belonged to the Army National Guard, a skilled force of part-time soldiers, who flew by jet-propelled airplane about 1,200 miles south from the state of Louisiana. They traveled to the western shore of the Caribbean Sea and labored in the hot tropical sun from January through May, the first half of that year as measured by the Gregorian calendar.

They improved roads, built schools and gave medical aid to the Belizean people who had recently established their own independent government after being a colony within the British empire for more than 100 years. They had previously been part of the ancient Mayan empire.

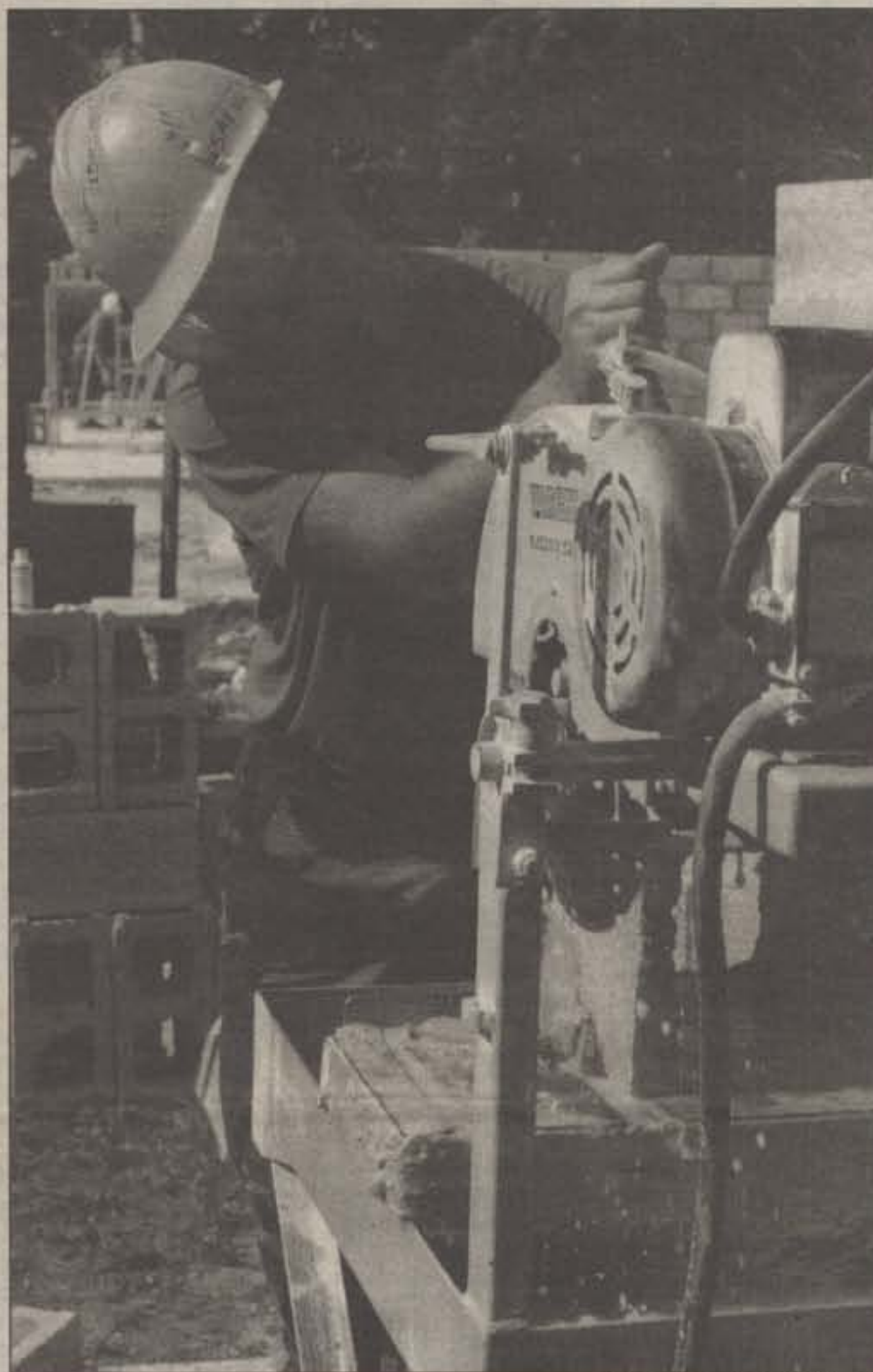
Comets are said to be a link to the ages for the people who watch them and study them during their infrequent visits to our planet. Hale-Bopp was certainly a curiosity for the people who last observed it streaking through the evening skies 24 centuries ago. The U.S. military serving in Belize were among the curious.

They hoped their efforts would contribute to the peace and prosperity of their neighbor to the south and to the Western Hemisphere overall. Their good intentions can only be measured in the context of the affairs of mankind that have occurred since they gazed in wonder at Hale-Bopp.

Let at least this much be written: They accomplished their mission.

"No sen lee bwoy fu do man job," is a Creole proverb of Belize that means "Get able, qualified workers."

Dr. Santos Mahung, secretary of the Ministry of Education for the past five years, will tell you that Belize has been blessed with thousands of qualified workers from the United States this year.



Photos by MSgt. Bob Haskell

The roll call included 3,400 active duty soldiers and members of the Army Guard and Reserve, Marines, Navy Seabees, and members of the Air Force and Air Force Reserve.

Military engineers -- masons, carpenters, plumbers, and electricians -- have labored many hours to give 1,700 youngsters in communities west of Belize City better places to get an elementary, or primary, education.

Doctors, nurses and medical technicians have flown to the north and south to give shots and prescriptions to thousands of Belizean people who live in remote jungle villages.

Six schools and a large latrine for a



**BRICK-BY-BRICK** - Sgt. Herman Carraway (above) sets steel reinforcement wire while helping to build a school in Belize.

seventh, seven miles of improved road connecting two major highways, and three large medical aid missions have been the main objectives of Exercise New Horizons 97, the largest military humanitarian operation in the western hemisphere this year.

That \$11.5 million mission has been ramrodded by the Louisiana Army Guard, who have provided 71 percent of the force. Other Guard and reserve members have come from California, Colorado, Florida, Kansas, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas and the Virgin Islands.

State National Guard organizations have been coordinating these nation-building exercises in Central and South America for more than a decade. Califor-

**CUT ABOVE** - Louisiana's PFC Shannon Litton (left) trims a cement block to size.

nia, Maine and South Dakota have led the way during the last five years. It was Louisiana's turn this year.

"We need better physical facilities to get the children to come to the schools," said Dr. Mahung. Eighty percent of the Belizean children who begin primary school complete the first eight years, according to the Ministry of Education.

These new buildings will improve the access and improve the educational environment which will help retention," Dr. Mahung added.

Joint Task Force Pelican, commanded by Louisiana Army Guard Lt. Col. Clifford Oliver, coordinated the activities during eight two-week rotations.

"We've got somebody here who can do just about anything," Oliver told more than 300 newcomers who arrived at the Burrell Boom Base Camp, about 10 miles inland from the Caribbean Sea.

They discovered a peaceful and diverse Latin American country with excavated Mayan Indian dwellings dating back to the time of Christ, growing centers of Chinese immigrants, Mennonite farming communities and an expansive jungle plain as flat as Kansas. Palm trees, wild parrots and howler monkeys also were part of the package. The currency bearing images of Queen Elizabeth II and the distinctive English dialect were reminders that Belize, formerly the colony of British Honduras, is still part of the Commonwealth.

So why the Americans?

U.S. concerns for stability in Latin America date back to 1823 when the Monroe Doctrine warned European powers not to interfere with independent nations on the American continents. Good relations with all governments south of the border are considered essential for business concerns and for combating the flow of drugs into the U.S. And deploying thousands of troops to a Latin American country each year sharpens the National Guard's mobilization skills.

Louisiana headed a smaller task force, also commanded by Oliver, during the first four months of 1996 when 850 people built three schools in Belize. That, Oliver said, was just a warm-up.

"I'm tempted at times to say why do we want to go to Central America?" observed Maj. Gen. Ansel Stroud Jr., Louisiana's adjutant general.

"The readiness is improved by the deployment and then the redeployment," Stroud explained. "I wanted this to be an opportunity not just to train engineers, but to train Louisiana staff. It would prepare us to support a deployment anywhere in the world. We are talking more and more about (direct) home station deployments. This is a lot bigger than any home station deployment."

There is another connection. Belize has been paired this year with Louisiana and New Hampshire in the National Guard's State Partnership Program that establishes





**THIRSTING FOR ACTION -** Spc. Chad Pitts (above), a member of the Louisiana Army Guard's Co. A., 527th Engineer Battalion, sips from his canteen.

military contacts between individual states and developing democracies in Europe, Asia and, now, Latin America.

Officials were quick to point out that New Horizons 97 is not part of the partnership. They also acknowledged it will reinforce the relationship, especially since 45 members of the Belize Defense Force have worked with the Louisiana Guard members.

"It's good," said BDF's Sgt. Nathan Orana about working with the Americans. "Ya learn and ya teach."

The exercise has reinforced the American engineers' faith in their ability to help less fortunate people.

"I think it's good somebody is doing something for these people down here. It's definitely a poor place," said Sgt. Demetric McLemore of Louisiana's 527th Engineer Battalion in a jungle clearing where Guardmembers were building a two-room schoolhouse of cement blocks as carefully as if it were their own home. It will replace a rundown, yellow-clapboard church for 50 pupils in the first to eighth grades.

It was also a lot of hard work, especially when the sun began baking the countryside by 9 a.m. For the first couple of days, the 40-pound cement blocks seemed to weigh 80 pounds. Brown T-shirts turned black with sweat.

But most of the workers adjusted during their first week. "You drink a lot of water, and you're all right," shrugged Spc. Russell Beauregard.

And the projects progressed ahead of schedule. Sixty-two percent of the work had been completed by the end of March, the halfway mark, Oliver reported. He was confident everything would be finished by the May 24 deadline.

Ten-year-old Dawn Ortiz told one Louisiana Guard engineer, 2nd Lt. Andrew Thomas, how much the mission meant to her in a note. "May God bless you and the U.S. Army for building our school and for making friends with us," she wrote. "I will be sad when you leave."

"The kids are incredible," Thomas intoned. "They give us notes all the time."

"One-one okro full basket," is another Creole proverb of Belize. It means: "Gradually, tasks are accomplished."

## INSIDE NEW HORIZONS

# Belize builders

By MSgt. Bob Haskell  
National Guard Bureau

Johnnie Trammel learned much about the U.S. Army during his 15 years on active duty. The National Guard, he recently insisted during a late afternoon break at a base camp in Belize, is every bit as good.

He can be excused for his bias. Trammel is the first sergeant for Alpha Company, 527th Engineer Battalion from Pineville, La. They spent the first half of April laying cement blocks and running electrical wiring for four new schools and filling and grading a seven-mile stretch of road south of Mexico and a few miles inland from the Caribbean Sea.

His outfit joined Joint Task Force Pelican for two weeks of annual training. Those 150 Guard members flew "down range" to support the six-month, nation-building New Horizons 97.

"The beauty of the Guard is that we take these people out of their living rooms on a Friday afternoon, have them standing in formation by 1800 hours, put them on a plane, and their boots are on the ground in a foreign country the next morning," Trammel marveled. "Show me an active Army unit that can beat that."

Lt. Gen. Edward Baca, National Guard Bureau chief, tells every civic group and government official he can that, when they call the Guard, they are getting the grass roots of America.

The Alpha Company engineers fit that bill. They are young and old, black and white, male and female. They are college students and veterans with families. They are part-time soldiers and full-time Guard workers.

About 45 of them experienced a foreign deployment for the first time. Twenty of them got their first taste of annual training. The other 105 have served in Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, Grenada and in other lands where they were needed.

Meet a cross section of the grass roots citizen-soldiers:

Sgt. Rocky Stevens, 46, saw Vietnam the hard way. As a 1969 Marine draftee, he found himself on a 1st Division recon team for six months and then in a combined-action platoon that taught South Vietnamese civilians how to fight.

"It got a little dicey in Vietnam," said Stevens, who came home after two years with the Silver Star and two Purple Hearts. "I didn't plan on getting those Purple Hearts," he shrugged. "But when you see a buddy go down, you go out and get him."



**BELIZE BUILDERS -** McLemore (top photo), Sinclair and Elkins (center) and Plunk (above).

Life has been considerably calmer for the licensed electrician and combat engineer during his 20 years in the Guard, even though he has returned to the tropics many times -- to Guatemala, Honduras and Panama. Now he is experiencing the joys and trials of parenthood. He and his wife have a 6-year-old son, and another baby is expected in early September.

Pvt. 2 Jackie Sinclair, 18, had discovered two things by the time she completed the Louisiana Youth ChalleNGe program in December 1995: she knew the satisfaction of finishing high school and she was drawn to the military's regimented lifestyle.

Fifteen months later, the young Pineville woman was a petroleum supply specialist pumping fuel into the vehicles that keep the mission moving in Belize.

"The Youth ChalleNGe program was a good influence on me," said Sinclair who now contemplates working full time for the Guard, enrolling in college and going to jump school. "Before, I would never have considered joining the military."

Sgt. Demetric McLemore, 35, had done her share of mason work during a dozen years as an active Army combat engineer in Germany and Georgia and in Saudi Arabia during Desert Storm. She spent her first day on the job in Belize supervising the tool room at a school construction site. Need a hammer? A tape? A trowel? A roll of string? See McLemore.

Her two sons, ages 7 and 15, and her career Army husband were back home at Fort Polk. It was a bit of a break from her non-stop routine as wife, mother, full-time mail clerk and part-time college student pursuing a degree in business office education.

Why the engineers? "I told 'em I wanted to do something outdoors; that I was tired of typing. The next thing I know, I'm in combat engineer training." Then she laughed. "I've been looking for that recruiter ever since."

Pvt. 2 Brian Plunk, 19, learned a little of basic architecture from the ground up as he helped build a two-room schoolhouse of cement blocks beside the Our Lady of the Way Catholic Church in Ladyville.

How convenient. That's what he's studying at the Louisiana State campus in Alexandria. The Guard is footing that bill because he has agreed to serve for six years. The tuition is free, he gets \$200 a month from the Montgomery GI Bill, and his monthly drill pay covers his other expenses.

"It seems to be a lot brighter down here," observed the red-haired young man whose fair skin was taking a beating. "Back home it doesn't get hot until noon. Here, it's hot when you get up."

Capt. Shane Elkins, 32, is the in-your-face company commander who practices what he preaches. He is not one bit bashful about grabbing a cement block in the midday heat and demonstrating how to wet it down so it will not absorb the moisture before the mortar has time to set.

His 16 years of service include four years in the Navy and an infantry hitch during Desert Storm. He lives with his wife and two daughters at Camp Beauregard where he is the full-time operations officer of a post that conducts 275,000 training man days a year.

"I like the structure. I like being part of something bigger than myself," Elkins explained of the military's appeal.

His 15 months as Alpha company's "old man" has reinforced his leadership philosophy.

"Leaders set the wheel in motion," he said, "but without the soldiers, it will not turn."



## INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES

'Joint Guard' peacekeeping effort is in full bloom

# A second SPRING

By MSgt. Bob Haskell  
National Guard Bureau

The fields around Heidelberg were plowed and the dark, rich soil was ready for planting. The grass was a lush green on the soccer pitches bordered by red, all-weather tracks.

It was spring in Germany. It also was the second spring of the Bosnian peacekeeping mission Joint Guard.

Jefferson Bennett, a high school guidance counselor from Oklahoma, and Kenneth Jensen, a Folsom Prison corrections officer from California, were among hundreds of Army Guard troops still doing their bit to keep the operation running smoothly.

By St. Patrick's Day, more than 3,700 Army Guard members had been mobilized or alerted to help keep the peace among Bosnia's uneasy Serbs, Croats and Muslims into a mission that is expected to end in mid-1998.

Bennett and Jensen have considerably different memories of the Germany they first experienced in the 1970s, when Bennett was an Olympic decathlete and Jensen helped watch over a nuclear missile arsenal.

"Preventive defense" defines the role in which America's military people are now engaged. The emphasis for the 100,000 Americans serving full time in Europe, and the citizen-soldiers needed to help them out, is to preserve the peace across all of Europe.

"Realistically, the 20th century ended in 1989 when the Berlin Wall came down," observed Maj. Gen. William Navas, Army Guard director, after a Sunday visit with nearly 30 Guard members on duty around Heidelberg.

"We're going to have to do these things, like Bosnia and Haiti and the Sinai, in order to prevent bigger problems," he added.

Filling in for active Army troops assigned to Bosnia is still a major piece of the National Guard's pie in Germany. A

woman who is a carpenter, a mechanic, a couple of housewives, and a Border Patrol weapons instructor were among the cross section of Americans who Navas saw in Germany.

Bennett and Jensen had been there before.

Bennett belonged to the Army track team when he finished fourth in the decathlon during the 1972 Summer Olympics in Munich.

In March, the lieutenant colonel assigned to the Texas Army Guard was a team chief in the U.S. Army Europe's Crisis Action Center at the Campbell Barracks in Heidelberg. Helping the Navy and the Marines get American citizens out of riot-torn Albania was their latest order of business.

It was a far cry from helping students at the Edmond Santa Fe High School prepare for adulthood back in Oklahoma.

"I was one of those Guard people who, after all of the time and the training, wanted to get in an active duty tour before they retired me," said the 24-year Guard veteran.

Jensen, a sergeant first class and a platoon sergeant in the California Army Guard's 649th Military Police Company, said he has seen some significant changes since returning to Germany after nearly 15 years.

For seven years (1976-82), he was a 1st Infantry Division soldier in Wiesbaden, then a Pershing missile section chief in Ulm.

"I drove down to the Wiley Barracks in Ulm after I got back here. It used to be a place of honor. Now it's like a

ghost town," said the 40-year-old of the reduced U.S. presence in the part of the world where the NATO allies once stood nose-to-nose with the Warsaw Pact.

Those reflections are mixed with feelings of success.

"To see Wiley Barracks in that condition bothers me," he added. "But I realize that my job was essential in closing down the Cold War."

Meanwhile, in Stuttgart, SSgt. Yolanda McCoy and 125 military police with the 933rd MP Company from Chicago were easily distinguished by the blue and yellow Abraham Lincoln patches on their leather armbands.

Those drivers entering Patch Barracks -- home of the U.S. European Command -- were greeted by Spc. Samer Elguindy, who seemed very at home checking ID cards. He said his duties should broaden his law enforcement horizons because he is studying criminal law. Elguindy intends to become a military lawyer.

"This deployment is better than the one in '91 (during Desert Storm)," McCoy explained. "There's not as much stress."



Photo by MSgt. Bob Haskell

**ON THE JOB - Illinois' Spc. Samer Elguindy (above) checks IDs in Germany.**

Norway's Home Guard trains with Minnesota troops to ensure WWII invasion will happen ...

# 'NEVER AGAIN'

By MSgt. Bob Haskell  
National Guard Bureau

Mark Twain once observed that if you don't like the weather in New England, wait a minute. It's bound to change.

A couple of hundred Army National Guard artillery soldiers from southern Minnesota could tell the American literary legend a thing or two about how quickly the weather can change in another place -- nearly 200 miles above the Arctic Circle in northern Norway.

They could also tell anyone who cares to listen just how serious the Norwegians, and many other people in that part of the world, continue to be about protecting themselves from invasion. The lessons of the Germans' surprise attack and occupation of Norway during World War II have not been forgotten.

The low but forbidding mountains of Troms County, where Norway bends west toward Russia near the top of the European continent, can turn from balmy to blizzard almost as fast as the citizen-soldiers can load and fire their self-propelled, 155mm howitzers.

"We don't have the mountainous terrain and there's a lot more snow than what we get back home," noted MSgt. Kenneth Johnson at the battalion's command center dug into a man-high field of snow. "But it's five or ten degrees colder in Minnesota. That surprised me."

The 191 people from such Minnesota communities as New Ulm, Luverne and Pipestone discovered that first-hand during the three weeks in February and March they took part in the 11-nation, 20,000-troop training exercise Adventure Express 97. (See Page 16).

In making their first trip to Norway, members of the Army Guard's 1st Battalion, 125th Field Artillery, commanded by Lt. Col. William



Kautt III, perpetuated Minnesota's 24-year training affiliation with Norway's Home Guard.

The Home Guard is a militia force of 67,000 whose members keep their military rifles and ammunition in their homes so they can be mobilized to defend such strategic points as bridges, power plants and train depots in a matter of hours, explained Maj. Gen. Per Mathisen, the Home Guard's chief of staff.

Long before other state National Guard forces became affiliated with Eastern Europe's former Communist countries under the State Partnership Program beginning in 1992, the citizen-soldiers from Minnesota and Norway -- united by a Nordic heritage -- began showing each other how they maneuver and survive in hostile, frigid terrain.

Lt. Gen. Edward Baca, National Guard Bureau chief, and Norwegian Home Guard officials formalized that exchange at Camp Torpomoen in central Norway last March.



**CHIEF CHAT - Lt. Gen. Edward Baca (above, left), Guard Bureau chief, discusses the mission with Minnesota's Lt. Col. William Kautt III. Norway Home Guard's Chief of Staff, Maj. Gen. Per Mathisen (right), talks with a Guard member.**





Photos by MSgt. Bob Haskell

### SNOW BATTLE - Soldiers (left) with Minnesota's 1st Battalion, 125th Field Artillery plot their next move in Norway.

defend themselves. We are very impressed by the size of your National Guard and the size of the defense for the United States of America," said Mathisen, a 36-year Army veteran.

"I hope the Americans are learning how we Norwegians stay in the field," he added, "as well as something about how the Norwegian society works and our culture."

They are learning what they might have to do to help defend the country that, one allied officer pointed out, has vast oil and gas reserves and is still considered critical for

safeguarding the North Atlantic's supply routes.

"Never Again" has become the Norwegian resolve that the kingdom will never be as unprepared as it was when the Germans invaded in 1940.

"The people understand that the defense of their country is the responsibility for everyone," Mathisen said.

That certainly applies to the Home Guard who celebrated its 50th anniversary last December. Those soldiers cut their military teeth during 12 months of compulsory service. They also muster for refresher training a half-dozen times a year until the age of 44, the General added.

"We are not like your National Guard," Mathisen explained. "We are more like a militia. We are formed into platoons and company-size units. The same people train on securing only one object. That is what they would do if we went to war."

Most U.S. Guardmembers, on the other hand, train at least 39 days each year and can expect to roll out for state emergencies such as riots, floods and forest fires, and federal missions that could mean serving anywhere in the world.

The common bond, however, is that the Home Guard in Norway is just as highly regarded as is the National Guard in the U.S. The leader of the Norwegian Defense Committee is a company commander, and the prime minister, Gro Brundtland, has been a Home Guard soldier for many years, Mathisen added.

That commitment to their state and their country is the tie that binds the citizen-soldiers from Minnesota and Norway, no matter how much the weather changes.

## Expanding the 'bridge to America'

By MSgt. Bob Haskell  
National Guard Bureau

"I'm tired of burying kids," lamented Marolen Mullinax.

As the director of an orphanage in the Romanian city of Constanta, where 21 of the 24 kids she houses have tested HIV positive, she's attended the funerals of 13 children in six years. All, then and now, were contaminated by blood transfusions.

Worse, nobody wanted them.

"In Romania, these children are the throw-aways," said the Longview, Texas native. She has devoted the past six years to making the abandoned children in the former Communist land as comfortable as possible.

Last summer, Mullinax discovered some new friends -- Army National Guard troops from Alabama and Indiana.

In the course of six weeks, a couple of hundred of those Guard people, directed by Lt. Col. Roy Smith Jr., from the 1169th Engineer Group in Huntsville, Ala., worked a miracle.

They painted walls and ran new electrical wiring. They replaced plumbing and installed air conditioning and poured cement walkways. They fixed everything their time and talents permitted in a day care center for 70 children who are being reunited with their families, a 32-bed hospital for Romania's soldiers and the orphanage run by Mullinax.

"They have solved problems that I had been fighting for five years," she said.

Although they could not free the children from AIDS, said Mullinax, "they said to the whole world these children are important. I never can calculate what those men and women gave, because they gave their hearts and souls."

Chalk up another friend in a far-away place for the National Guard's State Partnership Program, and for Lt. Gen. Edward Baca's vision of how the Guard can help the people of Eastern Europe learn the ways of democracy.

"You know how we feel about Romania," Baca, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, told Gen. Nicolae Schiopu, Deputy Chief of the Romanian General Staff, during a recent return visit.

The plight of homeless children received a lion's share of a Baca-led delegation's attention as they assessed the Guard's present and future courses of humanitarian action.

They visited an orphanage in Tallinn, Estonia, where 95 Russian children and teenagers abandoned by their parents live in a grimy 30-year-old building.

"Wouldn't this make a great nation-

building project," Baca wondered as he explored the facility that included a two-story building that cannot be used because it has no lights, heat or water.

At the Casa Speranta Orphanage, in Constanta, they were reminded just how much good Guard people can do.

"This was the right project to do. If it helps kids, it's going to get an immediate passage with me," said Maj. Gen. Clyde Hennies, Alabama's adjutant general.

Hennies said Alabama was among the first states to join the partnership program. Twenty-three states are now affiliated with nations in Europe and Asia in the Guard's "Bridge to America."

U.S. Army Gen. George Joulwan, Supreme Allied Commander for Europe, said officials are now working to extend the program into Africa.

"It's low cost and high payoff. It's extremely important to our future," said Joulwan who is focused on stabilizing the emerging democracies to ensure "a Europe whole and free from the Atlantic to the Urals by the 21st century."

Stability brings investments, he told

Baca and the leaders of this country's six other reserve forces in Stuttgart, Germany, during the second annual Reserve Component Senior Leaders Conference.

"You are an essential part of the team," Joulwan added.

But rioting in Albania during that mid-March conference reminded everyone just how fragile peace and stability can be in Eastern Europe.

Baca's group had visited Tirana, the Albania capital, the previous year to celebrate a partnership with South Carolina that had resulted in two new wells and renovations for that city's only hospital.

There are, however, other projects.

Maryland became Estonia's partner state four years ago. A military liaison team has since been based in Tallinn to help Estonian military leaders reorganize into a civilian-controlled armed force.

Now, Maj. Gen. James Fretterd, Maryland's adjutant general, wants to help the Russian children at the Tallinn Mustamäe Orphanage, described as the toughest orphanage in Estonia.

"A coat of paint is nice, but the problem goes beyond that," he said.

Asking the Maryland Guard's Family Program, spearheaded by his wife Ellen, to rent apartments so the youngsters can be moved into a family-like atmosphere is one avenue Fretterd will explore.

Asking Baltimore's 30,000 Estonians to provide funds for distance learning is another.

"I'm not interested in just babysitting" Fretterd explained. "I want to educate these children. They are our future."



Photo by MSgt. Bob Haskell

**BACA BUDDY - Lt. Gen. Baca, a father of seven, plays with an HIV-positive orphan in Romania.**

Also, the Minnesota artillery battalion has been part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's composite force assigned to defend Norway since last year, explained U.S. Ambassador Thomas Loftus.

"The National Guard has become an integral part of the allied defense of Norway, should that be necessary," Loftus said.

Baca recently led a Guard Bureau delegation back to Norway during a 17-day tour to assess the Guard's current and future roles in Europe.

He found the troops from Minnesota making the best of a tough situation while living in a land of white -- white outer clothing and helmets, white coldweather boots, and white netting that covered their green tents and six tank-like guns in; what else, white snow.

"It's a little tricky driving these tracked-vehicles around these roads, especially through the mountain pass over there," said an ammo sergeant, pointing toward a peak that towered over the camp and countryside.

What are the Guard groups learning?

"The Norwegian Home Guard is learning about the American will to





While many in Maryland's 175th Wing celebrated getting the C-130J, some crew had legitimate concerns

## LIFE after CONVERSION

By TSgt. Gary Gault  
Maryland National Guard

**C**apt. Mike Castaldi knows about clouds ... dark ones, those filled with uncertainty, and the kind with silver linings.

A C-130E navigator with the Maryland's 175th Wing, Castaldi recently learned his unit was to be the first in the Air Force scheduled to receive the C-130J aircraft. While many at the base swelled with pride over the Air Force's nod of approval; procuring the state-of-the-art "J-model" and its computerized systems meant that navigators like Castaldi, and flight engineers, would no longer have a place in the cockpit.

Compounding the problem, Castaldi had just moved from the 166th Airlift Wing, Del., to the Martin State Airport-based unit to take a full-time position just three months earlier.

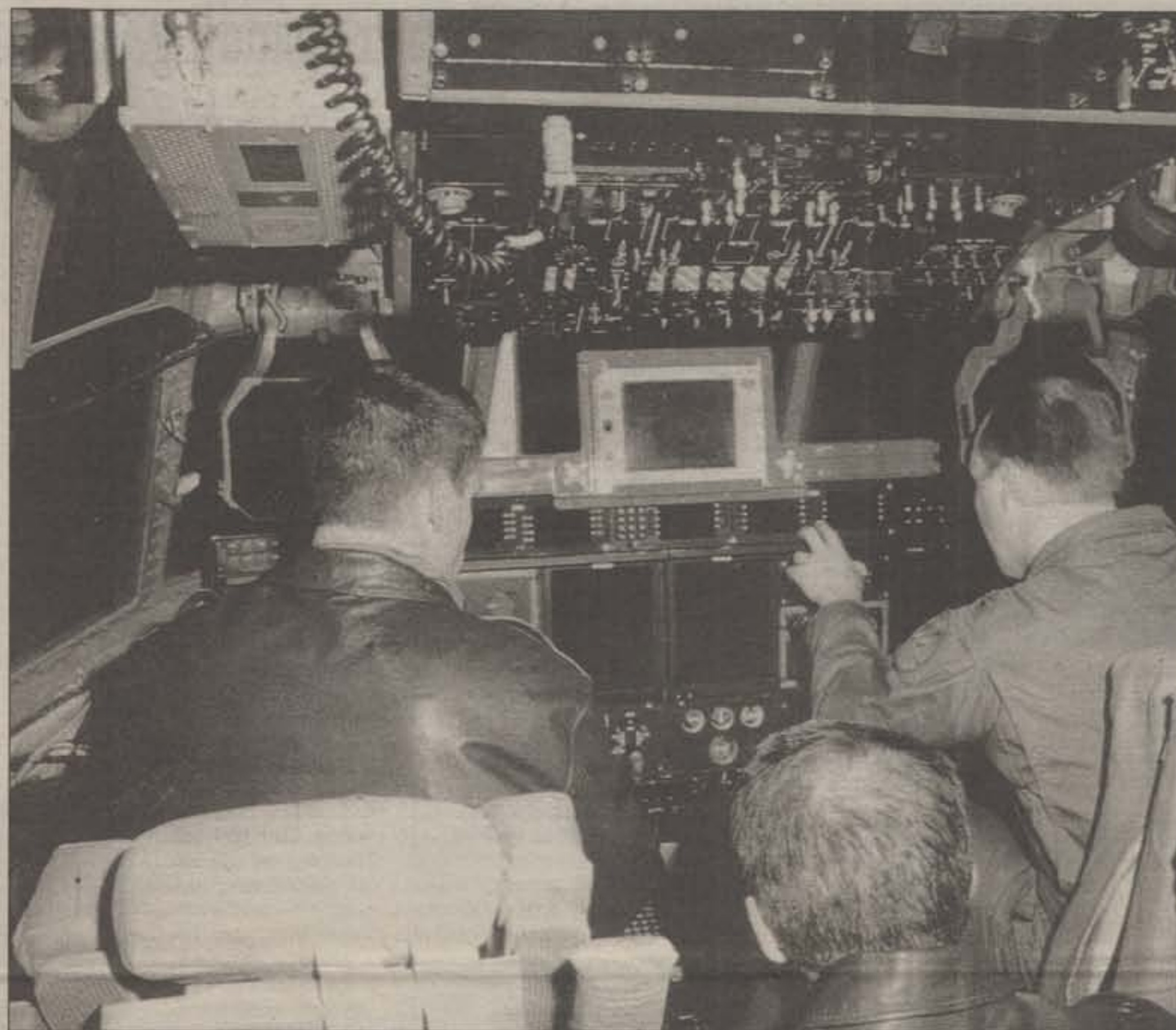
"I had a lot of mixed emotions and high anxiety about the conversion," he said.

That's before Capt. Theresa Matyas got involved. A former active duty KC-135 navigator, she lost her place in the cockpit when that aircraft was fitted with a navigation enhancement system. It would force her to retrain as a pilot. Just as important, it familiarized her with the arduous task of applying for an age waiver for pilot training. She accomplished the task in record time.

Castaldi was all ears.

"I guess I was fortunate with timing and having good leadership within the unit," said Castaldi, an 11-year veteran. "The 175th Wing took an active role in minimizing the negative impact that the J conversion presented."

Amid the muffled roar of C-130E Hercules aircraft engines outside his office window, Lt. Col. Chris Inglis -- the 135th Airlift Squadron commander and conversion project leader -- spoke with quiet



Photos by MSgt. Ed Bard

eloquence about the potential personnel "crash and burn" a conversion could create.

"The Guard takes care of its own. We will find a home for navigators and flight engineers if they want to stay," he vowed.

CMSgt. Fred Williams, who has spent 35 years in the cockpit of several aircraft as a flight engineer, says he will bow out gracefully. With more than 7,500 hours logged, the 53-year-old is frankly more concerned for the well being of those engineers charged with keeping C-130s flightworthy during these hectic days of increased Air Guard missions, while being preoccupied with their future in the Guard.

"We must prevent apathy when flying the C-130E and ensure that the flight engineers fly safely," the 135th's Chief flight engineer insisted. "We have one of the best safety records in the Air Guard (145,000 accident-free hours in 38 years to date), and I wouldn't want to see that changed."

Despite some of the J-model's baggage, Inglis said the pros far outweigh the cons.

"The C-130Es have a lot of time on the airframes and lack radar and acquisition-warning gear that we depend on so much in the contingency operations that we fly these days," he began. "The J-model is

completely computer driven, and at least 30 years advanced in technology over what we are currently flying. The outside airframe is the only thing that the two models have in common."

Other Guard units will soon have something in common with the Free-State's Air Guard. Pennsylvania's 193rd Special Operations Wing, Rhode Island's 143rd Airlift Wing and California's 146th Airlift Wing are slated to receive the J-model.

All eventual Air Force users will benefit from the 175th Wing's J-model experience.

"We are working a coordinated plan with the other units in operations, maintenance and training," Inglis said. "We also have the experience of training with our counterparts in the Royal Air Force. The RAF first purchased the new J-models well over a year ago and are sharing their hard-earned lessons with us."

The J-model's advanced systems only require a pilot, co-pilot and loadmaster to operate it. These people, Inglis noted, will have to get up-to-speed on the J-model's sophisticated systems and take on the responsibilities previously assumed by navigators and engineers.

"This is an extraordinary opportunity, but it also is daunting and sobering," said Inglis. "We have 34 pilots that need spe-

**FROM THE COCKPIT - Maryland aircrew (above) are trained on the C-130J's state-of-the-art computerized flying systems. From the outside, the J-Model (top photo) differs from other C-130s because its prop has six propellers, as opposed to four.**

cial training, who once they are trained in the J-model, can never go back to flying the earlier model.

The fast-paced conversion, Inglis noted, will introduce what those in the "J" community call a flight support specialist. Armed with a laptop computer, they run preflight checks before the aircraft goes wheels-up -- a godsend to crewmembers who on other aircraft are required to go through hours of similar checks.

The 135th Airlift Squadron is scheduled to receive the first four of eight J-models next spring. Until then, Inglis will be busy ensuring the conversion blossoms.

"We have the skills to develop a management plan, training facility, and the real-world experience to make this conversion a success," he said.

And for those navigators like Castaldi who have traded a place in an unemployment line for a spot at pilot training; suddenly, there's not a cloud in the sky.





Photo by MSgt. Bob Haskell

**FLOOD WATCHER - SFC Marty Kueffler (above) surveys the latest damage.**

## FLOODS

From Page 4

"We knew it was going to be tough on everybody," said Bjerke. "A lot of the civilians don't have the benefit of soldier training. Even with our Guard troops, a big concern was making sure everyone kept to their rotations and got as much rest as possible."

Long days were common.

"I bulldozed snow for a month -- from Jan. 27 until Feb. 27 -- in Eddy County," said SFC Marty Kueffler of nearby Devils Lake. "The snow banks on the roads were 15 or 20 feet high and 200 yards to a quarter-mile long. We'd work from daylight to dark, then clean the equipment until 9 or 10 at night."

"Those farmers were some happy to see us," he said of the satisfaction.

Kueffler was back in the saddle for the flood in mid-April. He helped span the rising Red River with a hydraulic bridge in Fargo as the flood gained momentum. Then he joined the evacuation force in Grand Forks.

The crisis earned the National Guard and other members of the military plenty of respect and many friends.

"The National Guard are out patrolling all the time. They are not letting people in," reported spokesperson Cathy Clark about the security in East Grand Forks, Minn.

And *Grand Forks Herald* editor Tim Fought heaped praise on the joint military effort a few days after a Guardsman, driving a four-wheel-drive Humvee, evacuated the editor and his wife from their home as the dark water rose early April 19.

"With what the Guard and the Air Force brought in to help us," Fought said, "I don't know what we would have done without you."

Melissa Williams lost everything in the floods, except her will to help others

## Testing the WATERS

By MSgt. Bob Haskell  
National Guard Bureau

*Water, water, everywhere,  
nor any drop to drink.  
-- 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner'  
Samuel Taylor Coleridge*

At 23, Melissa Williams hardly resembles an ancient Mariner. But the specialist in a North Dakota Army Guard water purification unit can tell you first-hand how water can be both foe and friend.

Williams was among the tens of thousands of Grand Forks, N.D., residents whose homes were flooded when the Red River broke through dikes and surged through the city before dawn April 19.

"The uniform I was wearing, 20 dollars in cash and my lipstick," was her account of all she had.

Williams then began testing purified



Photo by MSgt. Bob Haskell

water from the Turtle River to make sure it was fit for human consumption.

"I don't really feel bad (for myself) after seeing what other people lost," said Williams nearly a week after the dirty water from the once pastoral Red had filled her ground-floor apartment on Alpha Avenue, a stone's throw from the river's bank, and threatened such worldly possessions as her clothes, furniture, mattresses, television and stereo.

"People who have lived in the city for 50 or 60 years lost everything they had," she added. "It was so sad."

Still, her ordeal was typical of many National Guard soldiers flooded out of their homes, who still turned out to help.

Doing her bit meant spending 12-hour shifts testing the chlorine content in the water after it had been cleansed in six trailer-truck size reverse osmosis purification units.

The operation was producing up to 2,400 gallons of clean water every hour, said SSgt. Brian Ward.

As a member of the 131st Quartermaster Detachment, Williams was one of 162 North Dakota Army Guardmembers mobilized for the duration of the crisis --

**GOOD TO THE LAST DROP - Spc. Melissa Williams (left) tests North Dakota's drinking water.**

perhaps for another month.

Williams was already a seasoned veteran. For two weeks she had filled sandbags used for building dikes to contain the river that rose to 53.7 feet. She had monitored water pumps around the city. Then the sirens announced that the river had broken through -- the battle had been lost.

She was working on the city's north side at the time. The five-room apartment she shared with a friend was on the south side. She had lived there for 18 months.

"The dikes gave in about the same time," she related. "I got to my apartment about 4:30 in the morning. The water was running down the seven steps into the place pretty quick. I got to the front door, but was told not to go in. It wasn't safe."

Thankfully, her car was high and dry. She would be out between \$8,000 and \$10,000 if she lost everything else, Williams estimated, but life would go on. She knew she could eventually return to the city's South Middle School where she is a special education teacher's aide.

"My fingers are crossed that some things are savable," she explained. "It was really sad in other parts of the town, getting elderly people out of their homes."

Still, Melissa Williams knew what it was to be suddenly homeless. No checks, no credit cards, no place other than a bed in an Air Force dormitory to call her own. Her mother had sent her money, she said. She also was holding out for her National Guard check.

Meanwhile, there was plenty to do. Just because there was water, water, everywhere, did not mean it was safe to drink.

## From Bosnia to Bismarck

By MSgt. John Malthaner  
National Guard Bureau

No one needs to break into any lengthy discourse about serving both country and state when Doug Friez is in the room. He may be history's only person to go from peacekeeper to flood sweeper inside of a day.

A sergeant first class with the North Dakota Army Guard's 129th Public Affairs Detachment, Friez had spent the last several months in Bosnia helping international media types keep a pulse on U.S. soldier activities in support of Operation Joint Guard.

Several thousand miles away, his state's Red River flooded forth delivering a life threatening blow to Grand Forks without its State Emergency Management Director -- Friez -- to help resuscitate it.

"It was gut wrenching," Friez recalled of those fateful

days in mid-April surfing the internet to monitor the natural disaster back home. "I was getting a pretty good picture of what was going on."

As chance would have it, Friez and the 129th PAD -- mobilized for 270-days last December -- were visited by Brig. Gen. John Meyer, Jr., the U.S. Army's Chief of Public Affairs. Upon greeting Friez, and made aware of his stature in North Dakota, Meyer intoned, "Perhaps you should be back home."

Friez landed in Bismarck late April 23. The next morning he met with the Governor, his Adjutant General and the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. By April 27, after outprocessing, he was released from active duty.

"This isn't about one person saving the day," Friez insisted. "The action taken by the U.S. Army and Gen. Meyer is extremely fitting. We're just adding one more resource to a very catastrophic situation."

While the 50-year-old said he is happy to be home, he confessed, "a little piece of my heart and soul is in Bosnia." Now, the Peace Garden State's EM Director since 1993 is up to his neck in it.

"This is the most serious disaster I have been personally involved in," said Friez, who has been in emergency management for 23 years. "Now, we need to put all our energies together to help reduce the hardship."



**MAN OF MANY FACES - SFC Doug Friez (above, right) was in Bosnia before the floods called.**



## NEWS

## MAKERS

Compiled by MSgt. John Malthaner  
National Guard Bureau

**SMSgt. Norman A. Marous** was named by the Air Force Association as one of its "Citizens of Distinction." Marous, a 35-year veteran who works with the National Guard Bureau's counterdrug directorate, was cited for the prestigious honor for his many volunteer efforts. Committed to the war on drugs, Marous has also been involved with the Air Force Association, Civil Air Patrol, Andrew AFB Chapel, Combined Federal Campaign and the Special Olympics. He has held key leadership posts in many of the causes he supports. "The common denominator of all my activity is the military nexus," he explained. "Each has some connection to helping military members, their families or the image of the military itself." While the father of three is proud of the recognition, it isn't what motivates him. "I believe that most of our country's problems could be solved if people did just a little volunteering," he said. "So much more good could be done if more folks just participated in the process."

**Three Army Guard soldiers** are being credited with saving a man's life March 17 after he passed out at the Fort Dix-McGuire AFB Exchange. 1st Sgt. Kim Stangelo (Ohio's 107th Medical Company), Virginia's SSgt. Robert Young (2nd Battalion, 111th Field Artillery) and Virginia's PFC Wayne Webb (1-116th Infantry) were at Fort Dix, N.J., completing the first phase of their medical specialist training when they were required to put their skills to the test before graduation. Entering the exchange, Stangelo and Webb noticed a retired man slumped over on a bench. "We could tell he was in much discomfort. He was also unresponsive," Webb said. After successfully reviving him, he again became unconscious. The soldiers revived him a second time. Young arrived on the scene during the commotion to render assistance. A physician and nurse later assisted the soldiers until an ambulance arrived. "They did very good," the nurse said. It was later discovered that the victim had not taken his heart medication.

**After arriving in Belize in January**, Louisiana Army Guard's Lt. Col. Perry Smith vowed to do something to help school children there. He returned to Gonzales, La., and worked with the local Rotary Club to gather donations for school supplies. He then arranged for troops in Company C, 769th Engineer Battalion to bring the donated items with them when they deployed to Belize in February. Armed with paper, pads, pencils, crayons, basketballs, footballs and softball equipment, soldiers present the supplies to Norris Williams, principal of the Sand Hill school. "We could look into their faces and see our own children and grandchildren," said 1st Sgt. Buddy Gonzalez.

**The winter issue of the Airpower Journal** recently published an article titled: "The Air National Guard: Past, Present and Future." The piece was authored by Dr. Charles J. Gross, Air Guard historian. Gross has hammered out several important Air Guard books and short histories, many of them available at no charge to interested Guardmembers. Call (703) 681-0723 for a copy.



SMSgt. Norman A. Marous, a 'citizen of distinction.'



The Louisiana Army Guard donates much-needed school supplies to Belizean children.



The bust of 'Hellfighter' Sgt. Henry Johnson and the 369th Infantry were celebrated recently.



Brig. Gen. Walter Pudlowski swears in son Walter Jr.

**The Discovery Channel's highly popular aviation series "Wings"** went to Georgia recently to shoot a segment on the Peach-State Air Guard's 116th Bomb Wing. The feature, taped at the 116th's home on Robins AFB, examines the post Cold War mission of the B-1B bomber and includes in-flight footage taken from the cockpit. Several Georgia Guardmembers were interviewed for the feature scheduled to air in late May.

**The premier of a TV documentary about the New York National Guard's 369th Infantry**, an all-black regiment from Harlem, aired recently at Fleet Bank headquarters in Albany. The program, "Harlem Hellfighters," chronicled the service of the 369th during World War I. More than 170 Hellfighters received the Croix de Guerre, France's highest military award. "The story of the 369th is of heroism and distinction in the face of discrimination and racism," said Erlan Kailbourne, Fleet Bank chairman. "It is a story that must be passed on from generation to generation."

**The following individuals were recently received 1996 Air Traffic Control (ATC) Annual Awards**, in their respective categories:

- ATC Manager of the Year (enlisted) -- TSgt. Robert Worcester, Maine.
- Air Traffic Controller of the Year -- Mr. Brian Scarbrough, Mich.
- ATC Training Achievement Award -- MSgt. Edward Fish, Mich.
- ATC Maintainer of the Year -- TSgt. Derek Healey, Maine.

**The Air Guard recently handed out 1996 Bioenvironmental Engineering Awards** to their field's top officer and enlisted performers.

- Outstanding Field Grade Bioenvironmental Engineer -- Maj. Paul F. Davis, 181st Fighter Wing, Ill.
- Outstanding Senior Noncommissioned Officer of the Year -- MSgt. Kelly Ruff, 121st Air Refueling Wing, Ohio

**The Pennsylvania Air Guard's 146th Weather Flight** received the 1996 ANG Maj. Gen. John W. Collens Award in the tactical category. The annual award recognizes outstanding contributions made by weather units.

**Calling it "a big step on to bigger and better things,"** Brig. Gen. Walter Pudlowski, swore in his son Walter Jr. With his mother Elizabeth and friends nearby, the high school junior and newest member of the Pennsylvania Army Guard celebrated his swearing in and 17th birthday on the same day. Walter Jr. will be a tank crew member in the 28th Division's 104th Cavalry. His father is the division's deputy commanding general for maneuver.

**Minnesota's SSgt. Michael Granlund**, a member of the 109th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, won the 1996 Brig. Gen. Sarah P. Wells Award. The annual ANG honor goes to its top medical specialist.



Illinois communications experts wire into local county to provide critical service to community

# Dual Link

By SSgt. John Fundator  
Illinois National Guard

In a classic case of quid pro quo, the Illinois National Guard, DuPage County government and their taxpayers stand to benefit from a unique effort to upgrade the county's communications systems.

For the past few months, the Illinois Air Guard's 217th Engineering Installation Squadron, based at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport, have been sending skilled communications technicians on military training weekends to the sprawling DuPage County government complex to install fiber optic lines and computer antennas.

Once completed, the project will provide a vital backup path to the county's Emergency Management Center and improve communications.

"It's going to open up new technologies like the Internet and electronic mail between all the

buildings on the campus," said William Faedtke, DuPage County's geographic information systems and data process department manager. "Right now, everybody is free-standing with their own Local Area Network. This system will connect every building."

Illinois Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Richard Austin added that the fiber optics project is a superior example of governmental cooperation that will pay dividends for many. Not only will DuPage County avoid the expense of installing the lines, he said, but citizens will benefit from improved efficiency by their county government.

DuPage County officials also are thrilled with the partnership.

"We've estimated that we're going to save DuPage County citizens around \$20,000 through your (the Guard's) efforts," said Donald Zeilenga, DuPage County administrator.

"The government and the military take enough criticism," he added. "This is a good example of how working together we can actually save money and do a better job than if we went to the

private sector."

The project gives the 217th engineers, all of whom bring a wealth of technical expertise, important, practical training on high-tech systems. And, noted Austin, projects like this one "puts the Guard back in the community, back in the areas where they live and work."

1st Lt. Terence D. Felton, the 217th EIS' electronics section officer-in-charge, said his team have gotten a charge out of the project.

"It's electronics work, and they love it," he insisted.

As he helped put connectors on fiber optics cables at the main distribution point in the county's data processing office, TSgt. James Pearson said he'd like to see the Guard wired into more

such projects.

"We, on one hand, get a chance to polish and hone our skills and keep up to the edge of new technology," he noted. "On the other hand, we're able to save the municipalities money that they would have had to pay to get it done."

**WIRED IN - Illinois SSgt. Christian Almarez (right) straightens fiber optic cable. TSgt. James Pearson (above) attaches a connector to the end of fiber optic cable.**



Photos by SSgt. John Fundator

# Protecting the COASTLINE

By Maj. Maria L. LoVasco  
Louisiana National Guard

Eighty Christmas trees that once graced the lawn and interior of the White House this past holiday became part of the 50,000 or so that will sink their bark into stemming coastal erosion in South Louisiana.

Eighty percent of the nation's total wetland loss occurs in Louisiana where coastal erosion is recorded at a rate of 25 to 35-square-miles a year.

The Christmas Tree Fence Project is just one unique method used to help combat coastal wetland loss. The trees that are placed in the marsh in constructed wood fences decompose and trap sediment that form growing vegetation. The tree



Photo by Maj. Maria L. LoVasco

fences also break the force of incoming waves, preventing the shoreline from washing away.

Louisiana Department of Natural Resources Secretary Jack Caldwell said he hoped the high-profile trees would generate awareness. Soon, Gov. Mike Foster and state lawmakers made a formal request for the trees. It left Caldwell with a small problem: How to ship the trees from D.C.

The National Guard had that answer. The 1086th Transportation Company, based in Jena, saw an opportunity to practice its long-haul driving skills.

A Louisiana Army Guard UH-1H helicopter (left) delivers a bundle of White House Christmas trees to a marsh in Barataria, La. The decomposing trees will help rebuild the eroding coastline.

Two tractor-trailers and an escort vehicle driven by SSgts. Tim Smith, Michael Tradewell, John Grimm, James Robertson, Richard Luneau, and Sgt. Rafael Comas were dispatched to Washington -- about 1,000 miles -- to retrieve the trees.

Once back home, and after a short ceremony, two UH-1H helicopters got involved. Crewed by members of the 812th Medical Company, the bundled trees were sling-loaded to a nearby designated fence area. It was the fifth year that Army Guard aviation units have been involved in the Coastal Restoration Program.

Maj. Gen. Ansel M. Stroud, Louisiana's adjutant general, said the Pelican State's Guard will continue to support environmental projects.

"Every member of the National Guard is also a citizen of the state of Louisiana," he said. "The environment is very, very important to us."





## STATES

• Oregon Operations • Ecuador Effort • A'PEASE'ing Vets

## OREGON

The 82nd Rear Tactical Operations Center from Lake Oswego recently took control of an important staging area in Bosnia.

This is the first time a National Guard unit has taken command of one of Operation Joint Guard's key support centers since the peacekeeping action began.

The 52-member contingent took command of the Redeployment Staging Operations Center near Slavonski Brod, Croatia, from the 110th Engineer Brigade.

The Oregonians will be responsible for nearly 700 troops.

## TENNESSEE

Forty-six members of the Volunteer State's 164th Civil Engineering Squadron returned to Memphis after two weeks in Ecuador building two medical clinics in the rural areas of Latacunga and Fujili.

With the help of local Ecuadorian block layers, and men, women and children from the local communities, the engineers constructed exterior and interior walls, performed electrical and plumbing tasks and erecting the steel frame roof structures at both sites.

"You could just look at the local citizens and tell they were excited knowing that these clinics would benefit everybody in the community," said MSgt Jack T. Harris.

## Maintaining Excellence

Spc. John Brannick (right), a member of the New Jersey Army Guard's 50th Support Battalion, goes to the book before making a repair at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif. The battalion, tasked to finish 120 work orders during their two-week training, completed 500 — the most prolific performance ever by maintainers at the NTC, said officials.



Photo by Lt. Col. John Dwyer

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

Pease Air National Guard Base will now help provide quality medical care for thousands of New England-based veterans.

Portsmouth area veterans used to enjoy medical care and treatment at the Pease AFB Hospital. However, as a result of military downsizing, the hospital closed its doors in January of 1991.

This required vets to travel longer distances to receive treatment. Soon, Washington, D.C., was brought into the fold.

In early March, thanks to a sharing agreement between the Manchester Veteran's Administration, and the Granite State's Air Guard, primary care is now offered weekdays at Pease.

## GEORGIA

Forty Guardsmen and women were honored by Gov. Sell Miller for their role during the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games.

Each citizen-soldier received an Olympic Law Enforcement Command medallion. The presentation was made in the rotunda at the Capitol during activities commemorating "National Guard Day" in Georgia.

The Peach-State Guard provided command and control for the more than 14,000 National Guard soldiers and airmen on duty during the games.

## NEW YORK

By Maj. Paul Fanning  
New York National Guard

When Gov. George Pataki strode into Baker Hall in Peekskill, he was doing more than fulfilling a promise to 133rd Maintenance Company soldiers. He was reinforcing a bond between the state commander-in-chief and the men and women of his state's militia force.

Pataki welcomed home 133rd troops following their seven months of active duty in Europe supporting Operation Joint Endeavor, now called Joint Guard. It wasn't the first time 133rd maintainers saw their Governor. Pataki saw them off when they mobilized last June, and joined their families in taping a special holiday message.

The soldiers didn't forget, as they presented their Governor with a symbolic military jacket.

"You've been mobilized," declared Spc. Maria Roberto O'Neil as she and Sgt. Benny Luchesse presented a clearly amused Pataki his gift.

"Something very special is happening here," observed Brig. Gen. Bill Martin, New York's deputy adjutant general. "The bond between a commander-in-chief and the troops is of great value to both the citizens and the force, because it enhances the ability of the force to respond when it is needed," he said. "Such a bond takes time to develop and it doesn't always happen."

Pataki, one-time Peekskill mayor, a small city located near West Point, was a regular visitor to the 133rd's Camp Smith home.

Many returning 133rd maintainers were also mindful of Pataki's involvement in passing a law recently giving all Empire-State Guardmembers free tuition at state universities and colleges.



Photo by Maj. Paul Fanning

**COAT OF HONOR** — New York's Spc. Maria Roberto O'Neil (above) presents Gov. George Pataki a jacket for his support.





## HISTORY

• Celebrating the Air Force's 50th Anniversary

Brig. Gen. Robinson Risner's heroic deeds in Korea and Vietnam did not come without incredible sacrifice

## Aerial ACE

**R**obinson Risner was a 25-year-old parking garage owner in 1950 with no college degree and little love for his day job. He lived for the weekends and the opportunity to fly P-51s with Oklahoma Air National Guard.

Risner, one of four Guard aces in Korea (eight aerial kills), learned to fly in the Army Air Forces during World War II. He joined the Guard after the war because his reserve commission and lack of combat experience didn't allow him to earn a commission in the active Air Force.

The Korean War would change that.

Not only did the conflict give Risner a chance to fly in combat, but it gave him the "regular" commission he coveted. With it came a full-time career as an Air Force fighter jock and a unique place in history.

At the onset of the war, Risner initially believed that he would be deployed with his Oklahoma City-based P-51 squadron. When that did not happen, Risner scrambled to find another route to Korea. The Air Force, at the time, was short of RF-80 photo reconnaissance pilots, so Risner took it upon himself to log 95 hours in F-80s in just 25 days in order to qualify for an opening.

With orders to Korea finally in his pocket, Risner stopped in Tulsa to visit his family before shipping off. During a farewell picnic at the family farm, his brother brought out a beautiful unbroken mare and challenged Risner to ride it. Never one to back away from a dare, the brash young officer mounted the horse and took one of the worst spills in his equestrian career, breaking his left hand in the process. It did not, however, stop him from shipping off to Korea.

At his point of embarkation in San Francisco, he threw a raincoat over his cast and walked right onto the chartered civilian airliner.

Once in Korea, he had to pass a physical before being flight qualified.

"I convinced the doctor that the arm had been in a cast for long time" recalled Risner. "He agreed to take off the cast and x-ray the arm." The x-rays revealed that his two-week-old breaks had not yet healed. After much begging and cajoling, however, the doctor agreed to replace the cast with a leather sling. Risner started flying the next day.

"I moved the throttle," he explained, "with my thumb and forefinger."

After flying eight missions in the RF-80, Risner knew he had to transfer to the F-86 if he was to get his shot at an aerial engagement with an enemy MiG-15. Fortunately, 4th Wing's executive officer had held the same position stateside with the 137th Wing, Risner's former

Air Guard unit in Oklahoma. Exploiting this connection to his full advantage, Risner soon landed a coveted slot as an F-86 flight commander with the 4th Wing's 336th Squadron.

In defense of the decision, Risner pointed to his 1,000 hours of fighter time in P-51s and his rank of captain. However, Risner had less than 125 hours in jet aircraft and no experience flying the top-of-the-line F-86 Sabre.

More significantly, Risner lacked combat experience in fighter-interceptors -- a shortcoming that would soon reveal itself.

On that particular day, Risner was on alert when he his unit got a call to intercept some MiGs in hot pursuit of an unarmed RF-80 photo reconnaissance aircraft. Jumping in his F-86, Risner headed north, assuming number two position in a four-plane formation.



GUARD HISTORY

By John Darrell Sherwood  
GUEST HISTORIAN



**WAR HERO** - Brig. Gen. Robinson Risner (2nd from left), then a captain, poses with fellow Korean War pilots.

While Risner's held the title of flight commander on the ground, he didn't have enough F-86 hours logged to qualify him to lead a mission. Instead, he flew as the wingman for the lead plane, a job that required him to search the skies for MiGs and announce, "You are clear," to the lead aircraft every 30 seconds.

Risner's flight was vectored by ground control intercept radar to the RF-80. He remembered hearing the controller call out the position of "Little Friend" every few minutes. When Risner was only 18 miles from Little Friend, the RF-80 pilot called out, "Hey, you guys, can't you hurry."

As the F-86s passed the RF-80, the relief in the pilot's voice was palpable: "Thanks a lot," he exclaimed.

Risner didn't have time to return the courtesy. Flying directly into his flight, the MiGs spotted Risner's formation and turned northeast. The two F-86s flying to the right of Risner's element peeled off in hot pursuit. Risner's element trailed about a mile behind. One MiG made a split-S toward the Yalu. The other flew straight into the sun and out of sight.

The remaining four also soon turned due north toward the Yalu. As they did, Risner's element leader started shooting. Risner, who had never seen a MiG before, made a cardinal error of combat flying. He fixated on the target locked on his pipper, rather than on his job of keeping the leader clear.

"The first thing I knew, big red golf balls started coming across my wing -- cannon shells."

The MiG that had flown into the sun was now hammering away at Risner's tail. The two F-86s broke left and Risner went into a tight spiral.

"I ran into a little rough air and the slats on the wing which come out to give you more lift at slow airspeed came out with a bang," he recalled.

Although he thought he was hit, Risner stayed in control of the aircraft and rode the plane through G-forces so intense that they nearly ripped his oxygen mask off.

"I really honked her in then," he said, making two more spirals just to be safe. "I returned to the base chagrined and determined that I would not forget the assignment again."

He never did.

Risner went on to shoot down eight MiGs during the course of his tour with the 4th Wing.

Later in the Vietnam War, he would win the first Air Force Cross for heroism displayed in an F-105 strike against a heavily defended radar site. He also spent seven years as a prisoner of war at the infamous Hanoi Hilton as America's senior Air Force officer.

Throughout his career, Risner -- who retired as a brigadier general -- would look back fondly at his years in the Oklahoma Air Guard. He said his time there was critical in his professional development as a fighter pilot.

While the Guard did not give him much experience in modern jets, it kept him flying after World War II during a period of mass demobilization in the Air Force. More significantly, it gave him more than a thousand hours of flight time to hone his stick and rudder skills -- skills that would prove instrumental in saving him from disaster during his first MiG engagement.

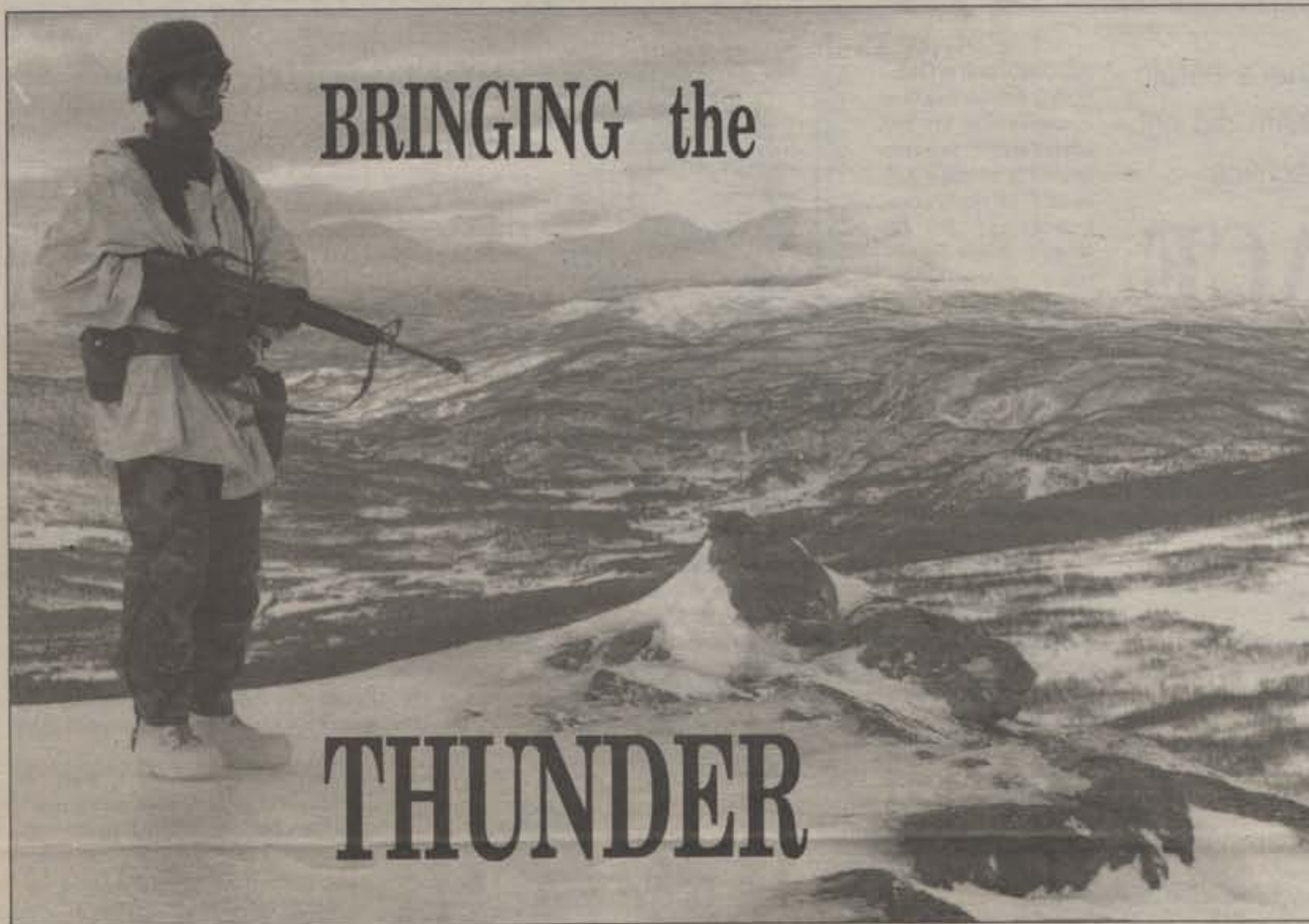
In short, what the Guard lacked in modern technology, it made up for in training. Risner's eagerness, physical courage and willingness to learn from mistakes did the rest.

*Dr. Sherwood is a historian at the U.S. Army Center of Military History and the author of the book, "Officers in Flight Suits: The Story of American Air Force Fighter Pilots in the Korean War."*





# TRAINING



**TOP OF THE WORLD** - Minnesota Army Guard's Spc. Mark Schmuck (left), a member of Battery A, 1-125th Field Artillery, stands post high above the Bardu region in Norway.

ment areas and the environmental conditions they will encounter.

Adventure Express featured conflicts between "Blueland" and "Whiteland." According to rules of engagement provided by the Norwegian command, each side operated as NATO forces, using actual weapon systems and doctrine.

The conflict between the two imaginary countries was based on territorial claims to areas rich in natural resources. In this case, oil and fish played an important role in the scenario leading up to military confrontation.

For the Gopher-State artillerymen, the exercise required a 21-day deployment. Upon arrival, the soldiers gathered at a staging area in Setermoen before being redeployed to remote areas throughout the country.

For Capt. John Vogel, Battery A commander, the challenges of training in Norway provided a

Photos by SSgt. Ed Holt

## Minnesota artillerymen go to Norway for 'Adventure'

By SSgt. Ed Holt  
Minnesota National Guard

**T**hey brought the thunder. Soldiers with the Minnesota Army Guard's Battery A, 1st Battalion, 125th Field Artillery made a resounding impression on the Bardu region of northern Norway recently after participating in Adventure Express 97.

The NATO training exercise included nearly 20,000 soldiers from 10 different countries in a multinational exercise that included land, sea and air warfare.

The otherwise quiet, arctic landscape of mountains, valleys and fjords were rocked by the explosions of 1,000-pound bombs, 95-pound artillery shells and the burst of small arms fire. The exercise also necessitated troop movements throughout populated areas, as the training area included use of private land.

The 125th FA participated as part of its commitment to a real world mission as one component of a NATO Composite Force (NCF), according to Lt. Col. William Kautt III, battalion commander. Along



with the Minnesota artillerymen, the NCF comprises one German Army field artillery battalion and two Norwegian helicopter squadrons.

The NCF has as its deployment area northern Norway, where its heavy equipment is repositioned for the NCF forces



**NATO EXCHANGE** - Minnesota's Capt. John Vogel (above, right) shares a laugh with Norwegian Capt. Ketil Blomlie. A M-109 self-propelled artillery piece (left) makes its presence known at Adventure Express 97.

to use. Its role, Kautt noted, is to demonstrate the resolve and solidarity of the alliance to react speedily and cohesively to a crisis.

"Operating in arctic conditions is a challenge to our soldiers, equipment and attitudes," Kautt said. "Most of the soldiers are excited to be here."

According to Kautt, the NATO exercise focused on smaller, forward-based multi-national standing forces. As a result, he added, it is imperative that Allied forces become familiar with their deploy-

good test.

"In any operation of this size, the magnitude of the logistics is extremely challenging," he said. "We had a lot of equipment to move. It's a unique experience for us to move a 20-ton vehicle through a small town."

The Norwegian countryside was also significantly different from Camp Ripley, where the battalion usually trains. While temperatures were similar, the rolling terrain of the camp gave way to mountains shrouded in clouds, deep valleys and narrow winding roads, typical to the Bardu arctic region.

During the NATO exercise, umpires (made up of officers from various nations) directed the activities on each side and provided ongoing guidance and feedback to participants.

"We were able to test ourselves at a variety of different levels," Kautt said. "Hopefully, everyone got in on the action."

This was the 125th's first year participating in the NATO Express exercise. The NCF was established in 1989.

Each year, one portion of the battalion will train in Norway as part of an "Express" exercise. Every third year, Kautt forecasted, the entire battalion will train in Norway.