

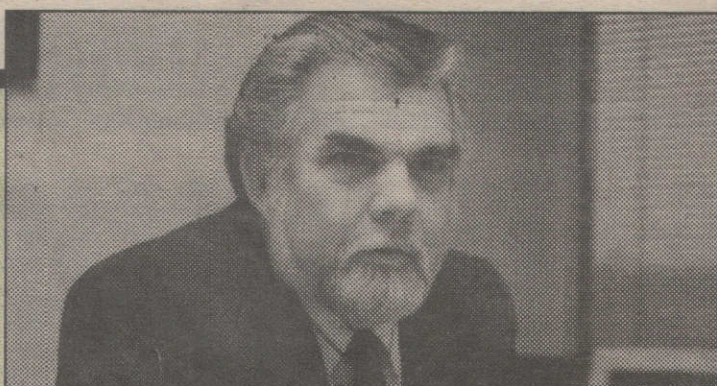
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THE ON GUARD

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February 1996



Photo by Sgt. Laurence Rogers

Guard aids East Coast with record blizzard

*Eleven states called-up
to help dig out neighbors*

SC FC Gregg Whistler, like many Guardmembers around the country, was pulling his January drill when the snow began blanketing the East Coast. He knew it was going to be a long weekend.

"We were the most likely to receive the mission (of snow removal)," said Whistler, a member of the Virginia Army Guard's 29th Infantry Division. "My drill's been extended a bit."

Eleven state governors called on their National Guards to help their neighbors clear away snow and transport emergency personnel after the Blizzard of '96 deposited nearly three feet of snow in some areas. Nearly 4,500 Army and Air National Guardmembers responded.

Pennsylvania, one of the hardest-hit states, required the most help (1,200 personnel at its peak), according to the Guard Bureau's emergency operations center.

DIGGING OUT - Members of New York's 204th Engineer Battalion (above) remove snow.

Many veteran Keystone Staters hearkened back to the devastating 1977 Johnstown flood to recall the last time their Guard was asked to respond so quickly and with so many assets.

SSgt. Ned Greene, a member of Pennsylvania's Troop A, 1st Squadron, 104th Cavalry in Philadelphia, was among a contingent of 25 unit members tasked with rescuing stranded police officers, transporting health care personnel and people needing kidney dialysis treatments. The 104th also was required to deliver bodies to the city morgue.

The community's appreciation, said Greene, made many forget about some of the less than glamorous duties.

"The thanks of the people for our work has been very gratifying," he said.

One local merchant, one of the better

■ See **BLIZZARD**, Page 4



Photo by Maj. Walter H. Debany

LAST EMBRACE

New Hampshire Army Guard's 1st Lt. Jerome Loring hugs his children Daniel (left) and Issiac before deploying to Bosnia in support of Operation Joint Endeavor. Loring's unit, the 114th Public Affairs Detachment, left for the region before Christmas.

**DRUG USE
IS
LIFE ABUSE**



COMMENTARY

Being macho is very stupid

By Maj. Terry Thompson
Washington National Guard

My two sons are 5 and 3 years old, respectively. My daughter is 2. From top to bottom they believe chocolate milk comes from brown cows, white milk from white cows. They swear it's true.

Like my kids, soldiers also believe in myths. Some believe you can train for the PT test two days before the test. Not true. Others think if they impress the right people, they'll get promoted. Wrong again.

Finally, there's a huge contingent of soldiers who think if you're not macho, you don't belong in the military. That's flat out stupid.

When I was a second lieutenant, I was sentenced one summer camp to Yakima. The sun was on autopilot, controlled by the devil. If the grill broke, the cooks used the hood of a jeep. We used to order breakfast and asked them to hold the sweat.

About the third day into camp I had an idea. Why not take my shirt off and just wear my T-shirt. Lose a layer and sweat less. Brilliant? You bet it was. Until the colonel popped in to visit. This was a man with more badges than a Boy Scout. I think he liked to sweat. I know he did. As the sweat rumbled down his raw, red face, he screamed at me to put my shirt on and never remove it again.

Later, I asked my company com-

mander what I did wrong. He said it sure made sense to him to have everyone work in T-shirts. Especially considering heat exhaustion was the flavor of the day. It's an image thing, he rationalized, you've got to look macho. Taking your shirt off was not the manly thing to do.

About 15 years later, and a hundred macho scenes gone by, I'm sitting on a C-141 heading to McChord AFB from Thailand. Total airtime: 23 hours. As many of you know, the plane has two itty-bitty windows. On my flight there were 100 soldiers. Only two got a window seat. If you stood directly below Niagara Falls, it would be quieter than this plane. There are no reading lights, no head phones and absolutely no climate control. Before you take off, an airman runs down the aisle, his mouth covered with a mask, dispensing bug spray. In short, this is an extremely macho plane. It's also as cold as Bismarck, N.D. Since freezing was never part of my objective statement on my resume. I used the handy blue blanket under my backwards seat.

Blankets, I figured, were cheaper than climate control. As soon as I put the blanket over my body I heard some snickers. The laughter was coming from a couple of Rangers. They had to be the sons of the Yakima colonel. I overheard them pumping each other up about how it didn't matter how cold it was, they'd never use a blue blanket. Instead, they'd rather freeze their butts

off. Macho men, that's what we are. No gentlemen, you're not macho. You're flat out stupid.

Being macho is a military myth. Of course, as a soldier you have to be brave. You have to have courage, discipline and character. You have to care and you must complete your mission. But you have to have common sense. Too many times I've seen soldiers risk their safety so they can be macho in front of their buddies. Consider this just for a second. If you're cold, find a way to get warm. If you're hot, get rid of your shirt. I promise you, you'll still be a man. Nobody will think you're any less of a soldier.

Hell, you can even have a glass of milk. But if it's strawberry, you'll have to explain to my kids where that comes from.

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, but letters must be signed in order to confirm them.

All letters are subject to editing for style, content and space requirements.

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GUARD TOONS

By Lyle Farquhar



"We seem to get more of these intra-service mediation calls right after the after-Christmas toy sales."



IN THE NEWS

- Missile Silo
- Space Available
- Young Hero

Veatch assumes key post

First Guardmember in U.S. Army history to become chief of staff of active duty installation

By SFC Joseph Zauner
U.S. Army

Col. Jerry Veatch is the first National Guardmember in the history of the U.S. Army to be selected the chief of staff for an active duty installation.

The former special assistant to the Fort Knox, Ky., commanding general for the Army Guard recently replaced Col. Henry Hodge as that installation's chief of staff.

Veatch is one of six children. Born in Louisville, he grew up in Garrett, Ky., before moving to Lexington as a teenager with his family. He was 22 and a student at the University of

Kentucky in 1970 when he enlisted into the Army National Guard for "patriotic reasons and family tradition." Veatch is a third-generation Army Guardmember.

"It was a time when patriotism wasn't necessarily very popular," he recalled. "But when people are in their late teens and early twenties, most are grasping for what they really want to do. Often we default to role models who we've



Col. Veatch

always looked up to. In my case, that was my father. He was in the service for many years."

Veatch describes retired Lt. Gen. Herbert Temple Jr., the former National Guard Bureau chief, as a shaping force in his leadership style.

"Back in the early 80s, we didn't have the buzz words of empowerment and things like that, but he embodied those leadership values. He was instrumental in solidifying many of the leadership traits and values I have today," he said.

Maj. Gen. Lon Maggart, Knox's post commander, had praise for his new chief of staff.

"I know Jerry knows how to get things done," he said. "He knows exactly how I think and he understands my philosophy when it comes to training soldiers."

Russian helps destroy U.S. missile silo

Missouri Guard plays role in delivering Russian, U.S. leaders

By SFC Ben Goodin
Missouri National Guard

In a windswept cornfield near Holden, Mo., a bit of the Cold War came to an end recently with a push of a button and a puff of smoke.

It was another memorable day in the history of the Cold War between the United States and Russia.

Russian Minister of Defense Pavel Grachev triggered an explosive device with the assistance of the Secretary of Defense William J. Perry that destroyed a missile silo that once housed a Minuteman II missile capable of delivering a nuclear blast to Russia.

The ceremony showed just how far the two countries have come in recent years to resolve differences and build a world of peace.

The Missouri National Guard's 1st Battalion, 135th Aviation Group, based in Warrensburg, played a significant role in this historical event. The 135th airlifted the American and Russian dignitaries from Whiteman AFB to the Holden site.

After the blast, a gray cloud of smoke rose from the ground a quarter-mile east of the VIP location.

Minister of Defense Grachev turned to Secretary of Defense Perry and said, "the first foreigner to blow up a U.S. missile silo is the Minister of Defense of Russia." The two men then shook hands across the detonating table which held a small American and Russian flag.

"This is one of the most memorable days of my life," said a jubilant Grachev. "Not only my children, but also my grandchildren will be talking about this event for years to come."

Just across the road, a farm house, nestled in a grove of trees, displayed an American flag blowing proudly in the wind. It seemed to make the setting complete.

A small table held a small yellow detonating device with wires connected to the explosive charge. To set off the explosion Perry held one button down, while Grachev pressed the other one, triggering the blast.

"All of my adult life I have lived with the threat of nuclear holocaust, and now we are in the process of actually eliminating these fearsome weapons," Perry said.

Holding up the small yellow detonating device, Gen. John Shalikashvili, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said, "This is an insignificant looking gadget that has enabled our two countries to take another step to make this world safer." He then gave the device to Grachev as a memento.

All of the 150 ICBMs in the Whiteman area have been removed. This blast marked the 18th silo to be destroyed at Whiteman.

Both the United States and Russia are reducing their armament by December 2001 under the START I treaty.



Photo by SFC Ben Goodin

DEFUSED-Missouri's SSGT. Sean Hagerty (left) directs the helicopter with the Russian Minister of Defense Pavel Grachev on board.

NATIONAL BRIEFS

'SPACE A' OPEN TO FAMILY

In a move designed to expand space available travel privileges and to enhance quality of life, DoD changed its policy on family members using space-A flights.

An Air Force recommendation accepted Oct. 20 now allows family members to travel space available within the continental United States with sponsors and overseas without.

Specifically, family members may travel space-A within the United States with their sponsor on permissive house-hunting trips linked to a permanent change of station. They may also travel with sponsors for stateside emergency leaves.

Family members may also travel space-A unaccompanied between the United States and an overseas theater, and within that theater when on a command-sponsored overseas assignment.

"The thought behind this change was to help minimize the stress families are experiencing because of drawdowns, high operations tempos and the frequent deployments of service members," said Brig. Gen. Thomas R. Mikolajcik, Air Force transportation director.

Space-A travel allows eligible passengers to use seats remaining on all DoD-owned and chartered aircraft. DoD categorizes Space-A travel into six categories:

- Category I -- emergency leave;
- Category II -- environmental and morale leave for active duty personnel assigned to remote sites;
- Category III -- ordinary leave, permissive temporary duty in preparation of a PCS move;
- Category IV -- environmental and morale leave for unaccompanied family members and DoD teachers during summer break;
- Category V -- service members on permissive temporary duty, foreign military passengers and students;
- Category VI -- retired military, reserve service members and ROTC/service academy cadets.

SHEPPERD AWARDS YOUNG HERO

Maj. Gen. Donald W. Shepperd, Director of the Air National Guard, presented a young hero award to Benjamin Scarpace at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mich.

Scarpace was recognized for his courage during treatment for leukemia. Since being diagnosed in April 1994, he has undergone several spinal taps and a bone marrow transplant.

Developed by the 127th Fighter Wing, based at Selfridge, the young hero program awards certificates, medals and other memorabilia to youngsters facing life-threatening illnesses.

SNOW SUPPORT

Delaware	246
Georgia	58
Kentucky	299
Maryland	525
New Jersey	550
New York	834
N. Carolina	157
Ohio	32
Pennsylvania	1,200
Virginia	510
W. Virginia	200

BLIZZARD

From Page 1

known dispensers of the Philadelphia cheese steak sandwich, treated area Guardmembers. Wisely, Greene passed on the offer. He was heading to the morgue.

In New York, 834 Guardmembers from 34 units left their armories with more than 200 pieces of equipment to help combat the worst blizzard in 50 years.

The 152nd Engineer Battalion, with units in Buffalo, Lockport and Niagara Falls, travelled 400 miles to Staten Island to conduct street clearing operations. A month prior, the 152nd was called in to dig out Buffalo after a record 38 inches of snow blanketed the city in a day.

The 244th Medical Group and the 247th Medical Company provided medical and transportation support to at least 20 hospitals in the nation's largest city.

"There's nothing we can't accomplish in an emergency," said Spc. Manuel Marquez. "Not only have we been towing stranded police vehicles and helping deliver medical supplies, but we are also finding places for homeless people to stay."

"This is the kind of mission that only the National Guard can accomplish," he added.

After witnessing Spc. Kenneth Mack and the humvee ambulance he was driving plow through three-foot snow drifts, Harry Schimanski, a civilian paramedic, was also convinced.

"This guy got us to a cancer patient who needed immediate attention," he said. "With soldiers' (help), lives have been saved."

New York's Sgt. Laurence Rogers, Pennsylvania's Maj. Chris Cleaver and Maine's MSgt. Bob Haskell contributed to this story.

F-4 Phantom era comes to end

Idaho, Nebraska fliers return aircraft from Turkey

By Lt. Col. Jim McMurray
Nebraska National Guard

The F-4 Phantom era came to an end recently when the Nebraska Air National Guard's 155th Air Refueling Wing helped Idaho's 124th Fighter Wing return six F-4G Phantom IIs from Incirlik AB, Turkey.

The flight marked the final overseas deployment of Air National Guard F-4s. The 124th Fighter Wing of the Idaho Air National Guard in Boise, the only Air Guard or Reserve unit performing the Wild Weasel mission, had been supporting Operation Provide Comfort for 90 days while flying out of Incirlik AB near Adana, Turkey.

According to Col. Gary Sayler, 124th Fighter Wing commander, the Idaho unit is switching missions shortly to the A-10A Thunderbolt II ground attack aircraft as the last of their F-4G aircraft retire to the Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Center, otherwise known as the "boneyard," near Tucson, Ariz.

This will end the F-4 Phantom II era in the U.S. Air Force and the Air Reserve Forces. A sad moment for those who came to rely on the Phantom's rugged and reliable qualities in both peace and war.

The F-4 Phantom II era in the U.S. Air Force began in May 1963 when the first F-4C Phantom flew operationally. It saw action in every U.S. conflict from Vietnam to Operation Desert Storm.

The Advanced Wild Weasel aircraft, the newest version of the F-4, helped tactical strike forces survive by seeking out and suppressing or destroying enemy



Photo by Lt. Col. Jim McMurray

radar directed surface-to-air sites and anti-aircraft artillery batteries.

At Incirlik, the Air Force bid farewell to the F-4G with a "Phantastic Phantom Farewell" and open house featuring static displays, videos and a four ship fly-by of the last of what had once been the U.S. Air Force's premier fighter aircraft. During the celebration, the F-4's history and contributions to U.S. airpower were also remembered and celebrated.

Assisting the 124th in their redeployment to Boise was a KC-135R aerial tanker from the Nebraska Air Guard's 155th Air Refueling Wing, based in Lincoln. Up until 1993, the 155th also flew the reconnaissance version of the Phantom II.

The final flight home took the six Idaho

REFUEL - Idaho pilots with the 124th Fighter Wing maneuver an F-4G underneath a Nebraska KC-135R stratotanker refueling boom somewhere over the Atlantic Ocean.

aircraft through the Mediterranean Sea and out into the Atlantic. After a two day stopover at Lajes Field in the Azores Islands of Portugal, the six Phantom IIs departed for Boise. Again accompanied by the Nebraska KC-135R, which conducted numerous air-to-air refueling operations during the course of this "phantom phlight."

The F-4G's made it to their home at Gowan Field in Boise, Idaho, bringing to an end the F-4 Phantom II era.

BOSNIA BOUND

Guardmembers with the Michigan Air Guard's 127th Fighter Wing and 191st Airlift Group load tank parts headed for troops in Bosnia. The airmen shipped 55 pallets of supplies to Europe for the peacekeeping effort.

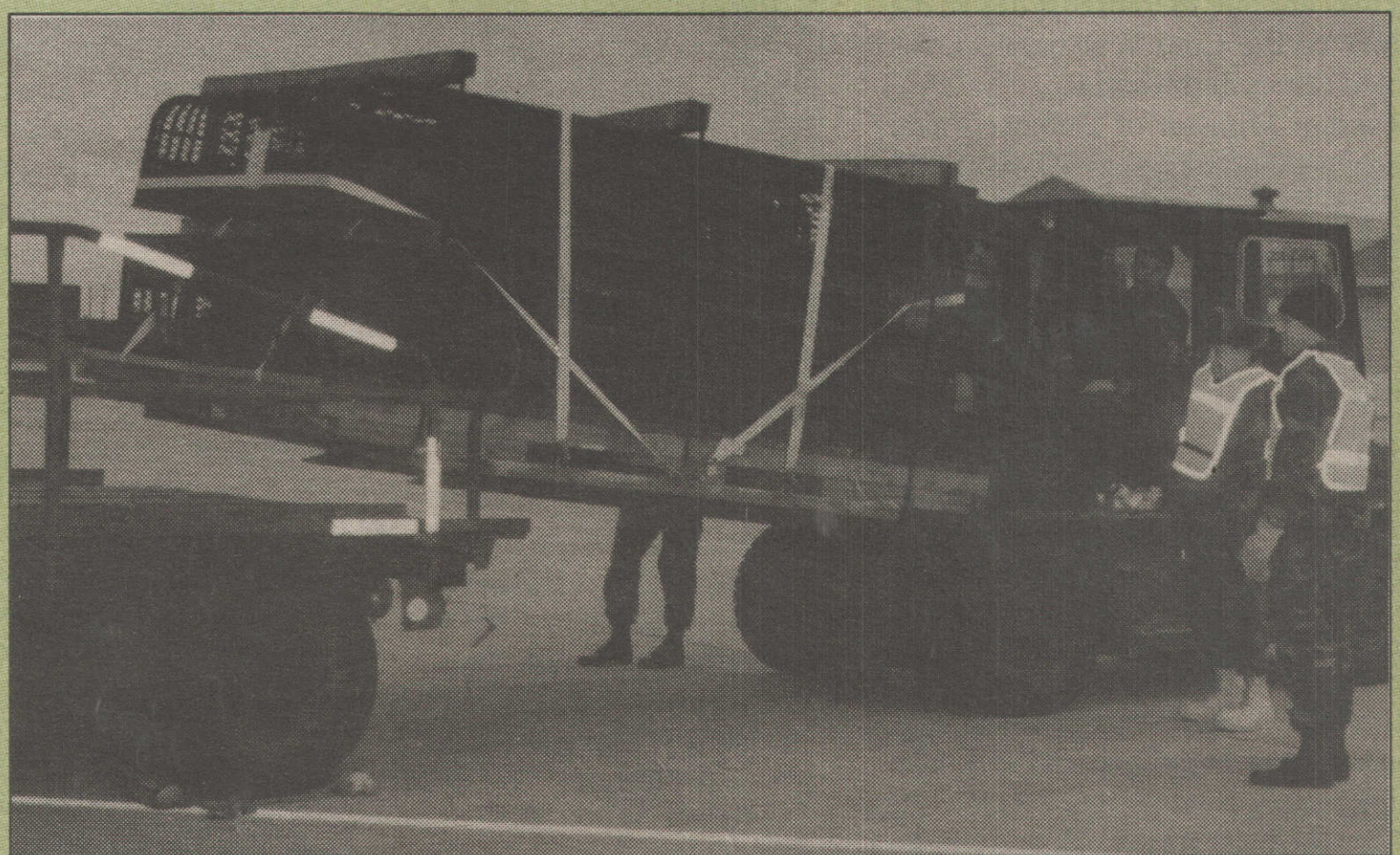


Photo by MSgt. Bill Frasik



PEOPLE

New Hampshire Guard attorney goes to Haiti to help fix court system

Deploying JUSTICE

By Maj. John Rice
New Hampshire National Guard

Just over a year ago, Haiti, not Bosnia, captured headlines around the world. The nation watched as an American negotiating team led by former President Jimmy Carter and Gen. Colin Powell convinced Haitian dictator Raul Cedras to leave.

The New Hampshire Air Guard's 157th Air Refueling Wing played a role in the weeks that followed, augmenting a Florida-based tanker task force which refueled Haitian-bound United Nations aircraft. That contribution added a new chapter when Wing Staff Judge Advocate Lt. Col. Don Perrault deployed to Haiti with a U.S. Army Reserve Civil Affairs Ministry Assistance Team.

Perrault, a Manchester, N.H., attorney, was in-country recently to survey the Haitian "juge de paix" (justice of the peace) court system.

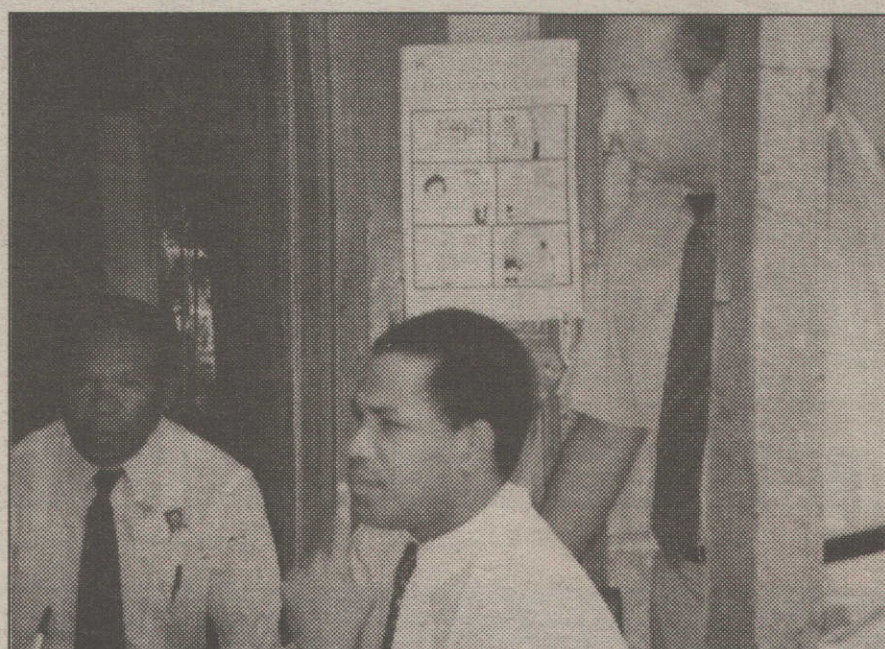


Photo courtesy New Hampshire National Guard

"We offered training and assistance to the Haitian legal system," Perrault said. "We surveyed about 93 out of 180 courthouses outside of Port-au-Prince."

Specifically, Perrault's team and the five others travelled into rural areas looking at the resources available at local courts and the education and training judicial personnel were receiving.

Getting 10-page surveys out to Haiti's rural backlands proved a logistical nightmare. There is almost no telephone service and no electricity. Roads are deeply rutted and treacherous. It took three hours to go 100 miles, via a rented four-wheel drive van, from Port-au-Prince to the Jacmel region south of the city. At one point Haitian children acted as guides to find an adequate crossing site across a bridgeless river. "You could start a great front-end alignment business down there," Perrault said.

Arriving in villages, Perrault's team found tin-roofed, ramshackled one-room court houses that broiled in the

LAW TALK - Lt. Col. Don Perrault (right), a lawyer with New Hampshire's 157th Air Refueling Wing, discusses Haitian law with a judge (left) with the aid of an interpreter.

102-degree heat. One dug water well serviced entire towns, where there was no sewer, running water or plumbing. Courthouses, like the rest of the buildings, were without electricity or security.

"At best they had something that passed for a desk," Perrault said. "The inability to lock the building meant nothing of any value could be stored there. The filing system frequently consisted of putting papers on a hook on the wall. When a criminal is charged, he is often asked to take a taxi to jail, or get there however he can."

One glaring problem the team found was that justices and court personnel had not been paid for months, if at all. Still, meager as local resources are, the Haitian legal system functions in its own way.

"It seems to be dealing most with community disputes," Perrault said. "There is more mediating and less putting people in jail. The courts seek rulings that give both sides vindication and that's what village justice should be all about. Not pulling out the law books."

The reports Perrault's team prepared will be shared with the Haitian Ministry of Justice, the U.S. State Department and U.N. commanders.

"The country has an awful long way to go," Perrault observed. "The challenges are so numerous and so daunting it makes it difficult to know where to begin. You come away with a sense of personal gratification, given the overall need in Haiti, but you have to keep in mind that progress is measured down there not in inches, but in millimicrons."

Blast from the past

Retired Ohio Adjutant General recalls WWII

By MSgt. Robert L. Jennings
Ohio National Guard

Fifty years after the most destructive war in history, many voices from World War II are now silent. Much of what remains can only be found in museums and history books, and personal accounts are often sketchy.

Maj. Gen. (ret.) Sylvester T. Del Corso is the exception. He recalls every battle, every conflict and every order with pride. Del Corso proudly held the pen that inked the unconditional surrender of Japanese forces in Northern Luzon.

The former Adjutant General of Ohio is neither shy nor apologetic, but rather reflective when he speaks of a time when the world was at war.

"I've always liked the military and spent many hours as a child watching soldiers train at the National Guard armory in my hometown, Berea, Ohio," Del Corso said.

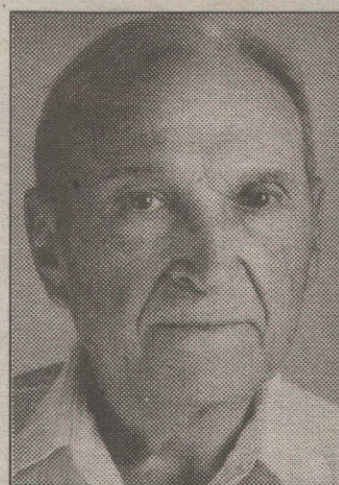
"One day a soldier asked me, 'Why don't you just join?' I told him I was only 16, and he said, 'Well tell 'em you're 18.' The commander of that unit was my next door neighbor and he knew I wasn't old enough, but swore me in anyway on Sept. 18, 1928."

Del Corso received his commission in 1937.

A few years later, in the wake of mounting aggression by Germany in Europe, President Franklin D. Roosevelt activated the National Guard.

Ohio's 37th Infantry Division landed in April 1943 on Guadalcanal and quickly established a reputation as fierce and resourceful combatants. On New Georgia, they took the strategically important Munda airfield, proving concentrated artillery fire could be effective in jungle warfare. As second-in-command of a combat regiment, Del Corso remembers that mission vividly.

"We won every battle, but I will admit our toughest engagement was for Hill 700, in March of 1943 on Bougainville," he said. "We were pitted against the Japanese's 6th Division, considered in-



Sylvester Del Corso

vincible.

"The fighting was fierce to sporadic for 21 days. But they fought and died to the man. They just kept coming."

When the smoke cleared, the 37th's superiority was evident. The

Japanese had lost nearly 8,000 soldiers and another 2,000 were critically injured. The Buckeye unit's losses were minimal.

"We annihilated the famed 6th Division. Gen. Tomoyuki Yamashita, the notorious 'Tiger of Malaya,' wanted to know who did it. When he found out who we were, he assigned a lieutenant general to keep him informed of our whereabouts."

On Jan. 9, 1945, the 37th stormed ashore at Lingayen Gulf on the island of Luzon in the Philippines. The division raced toward the captured city of Manila, taking strategic locations along the way.

"The Japanese knew that Manila was lost and set out to destroy it," he recalled. "The city was reduced to rubble, and many tortured and killed Filipinos were left in the wake of the fleeing enemy."

The Japanese retreated north and established an impassable pocket of resistance called the Shimbu Line. The 37th was assigned to take Mount Pacawagon.

"We said, 'General, we'll be on that mountain by nightfall.' And he said if we took it he'd buy us all a drink.

"In typical 37th attack style, we saturated them with heavy artillery for more than an hour," Del Corso added. "Before evening fell, we had taken the mountain. The commander couldn't believe it, but true to his word, he brought us booze."

The war would last just three more months. The 37th Infantry Division, as one of the most highly decorated divisions, were assigned to accept the surrender of Japanese forces in the Philippines Sept. 3, 1945.

"During the signing I asked my adversary, he was a 65-year-old colonel, how long it had been since he'd seen his family? He said 12 years. Three days later a delegation of Filipinos took him to Manila where he was hung for war crimes. Initially, I refused to turn him over to the Filipinos until they brought official warrants. Through a twist of fate, I had become my enemy's protector."

Del Corso lives in Worthington, Ohio, just a few miles from the state's National Guard Headquarters, where he was Adjutant General from 1968-1971.

Pennsylvania, Ohio engineers do their part in Haiti

Rebuilding a DEMOCRACY

By Maj. Chris Cleaver
Pennsylvania National Guard

Last year, U.S. troops stormed into Haiti prepared to oust the military junta and reinstate President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. They also began rebuilding a ravaged country.

Recently, National Guard engineers with Pennsylvania's 201st Engineer Battalion and Ohio's 200th Engineer Battalion joined active duty soldiers to continue those rebuilding efforts.

Engineers encountered demanding conditions as they renovated portions of a school and hospital, assisted with the construction of a two-lane highway and operated a concrete plant. Wearing flack vests in soaring tropical temperatures, fighting the stench of open sewers and rotting garbage and keeping dozens of Haitians clear of work sites, made work difficult at times.

Adding to the challenge, roads looked like battle zones as roadblocks of burning tires, car frames and boulders halted traffic. The roadblocks were in response to the killing of a congressman who was a former Aristide bodyguard. Angry pro-Aristide crowds worked through the snarled traffic, hunting for supporters of the former military regime. The airmen could do little but watch and wait until the roadblocks were moved or the fires were low enough to drive through.

Despite the conditions, tired crews returning from long shifts were proud of work completed.

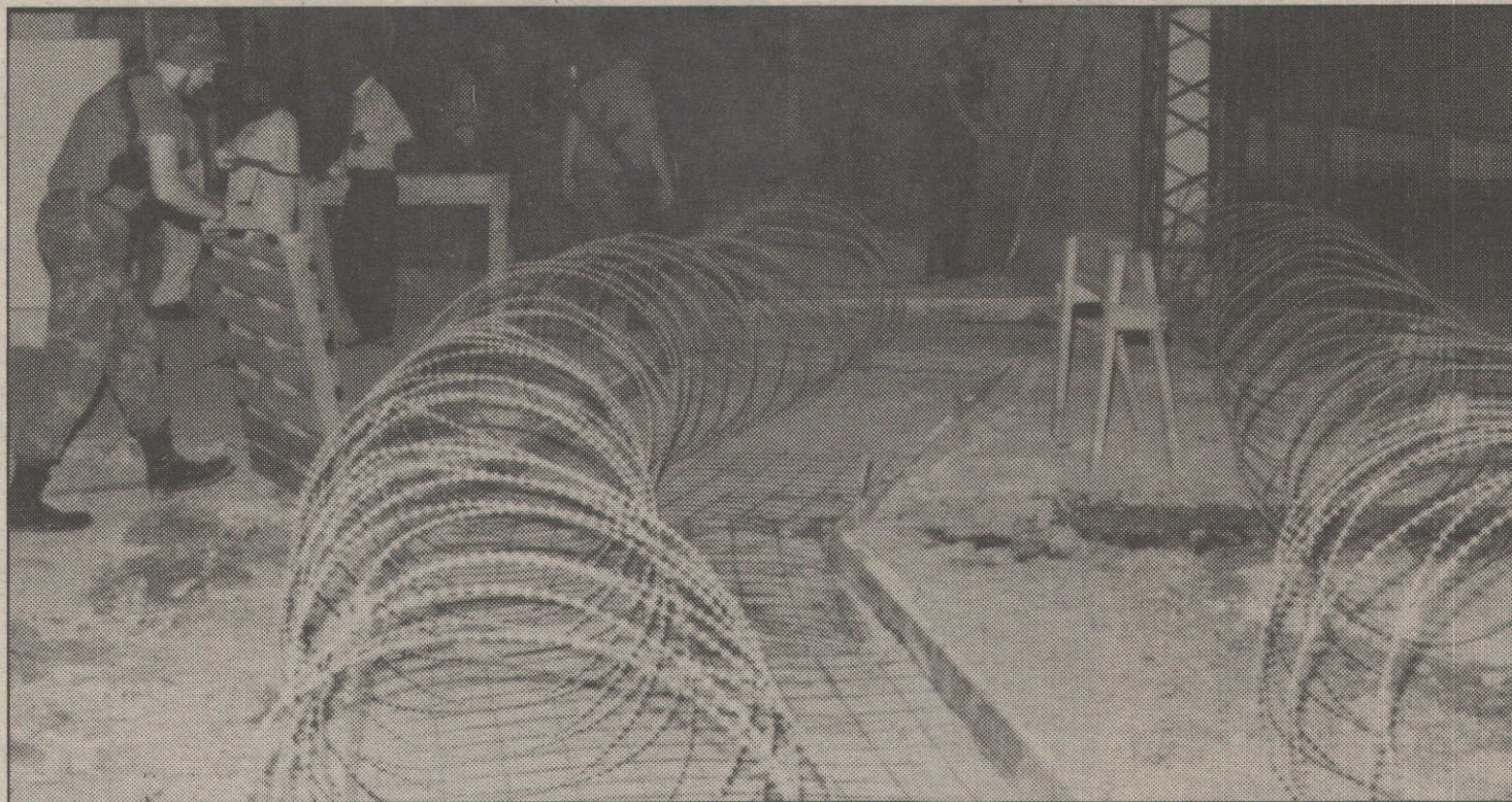
"Over the last several nights we poured some 70 yards of concrete and built a sidewalk 5-feet wide, 6-inches deep and 800-feet long," said the 200th's Maj. James H. Parent.

"We are here to provide humanitarian service and we are doing just that," added the 201st's SSgt. Patrick W. McLaughlin, a structural specialist who spent most of his time working at the University Hospital.

Eighty-three Keystone and Buckeye State Guardmembers participated in Exercise Fairwinds. Overall, some 500 engineers performed dozens of construction projects as part of the exercise that began April and concluded last month.

Maj. Don J. Christianson, commander of the active duty 820th Engineer Battalion, based at Nellis AFB, Nev., said a number of variables went into how the projects were chosen.

"Embassy personnel working with the



Photos courtesy of Pennsylvania National Guard

BUILD UP - Guardmembers (left) working the night shift at the Haiti University Hospital framed a sidewalk. Pennsylvania's Amn. Richard Brenizer (below) hammers a nail into a new command post.



Haitians would decide on projects, then we would look at the training value and pick from that list," said Christianson.

Fairwinds provided a unique opportunity for active and Guard forces to work together. Christianson was quick to praise the Guard.

"Each group had different levels of experience, and they worked well with each other," he said.

"Our airmen have done an excellent job," confirmed MSgt. Peter Fludovich, 201st first sergeant. "There is always some skepticism about the Guard getting the work done. But we are older, more mature and many of our people have

similar civilian trades.

"We get the job done," he added.

Getting the job done in Haiti was not always simple.

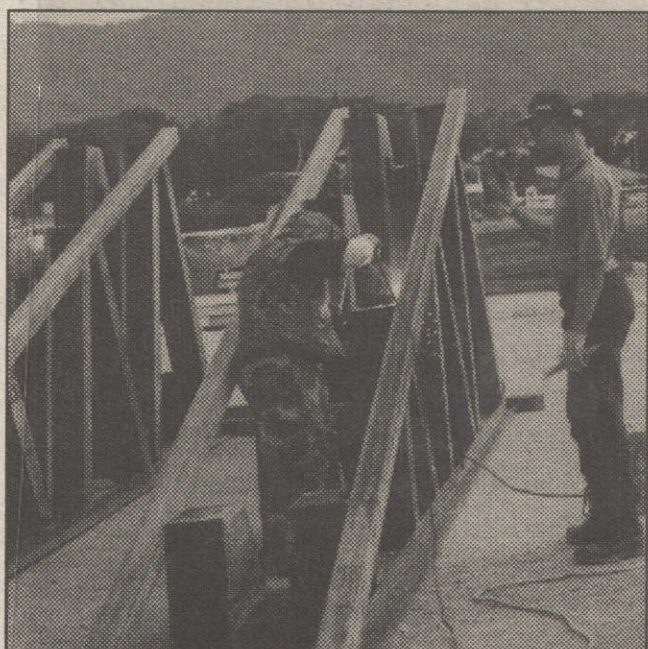
"Yes, it's still construction work, but we always had to improvise," said TSgt. James Payne, a 201st structural craftsman. "If you needed something and it wasn't on site, there was no supply line. Simple things like pipe fittings, they don't exist in Haiti. Everyone takes their skills and comes up with an answer -- Yankee ingenuity."

Spending time in one of the world's poorest nations moved many of the airmen. As engineers convoyed to and from

construction sites, children were quick to wave and smile at the passing Americans. Children would line up along the concertina wire, giggling and laughing as airmen exchanged high-fives and handshakes. In contrast, the older Haitians looked on with hollow, blank stares.

In a country of little employment, near total poverty, and a life expectancy of 35, there is little to look forward to.

"I know the guys were really touched about their sense of doing anything to get the infrastructure to some point where at least people can live," said the 201st's Maj. Frank J. Sullivan. "Just turning things around a little bit in a place where condi-



WELDING - A member of the Ohio Guard welds a car wash rack with the help of a Haitian co-worker.

tions were so bad was important."

A nation of 7 million, the capital of Port-Au-Prince is home to 4 million. It is a city of open sewers and decay. Vehicles are piled along roadsides, stacked beside equally large piles of rotting garbage. Shacks were butted against each other, many with sewers at their doorstep. Nearby children and adults wash laundry and bathe.

"There is a saying here, 'everything in Haiti is broken but the will of the people,'" said Payne, who spent seven weeks on site, longer than any Pennsylvania Guardmember. "These people do not lack motivation; they are in need of training. When we are on site they are right there watching us intently, trying to learn. Very few of them probably went to school."

"This deployment was challenging, with good projects, and a few twists," added Ohio's Maj. Michael Shomrock. "Our people did an outstanding job and completed several projects that will really help the people in Haiti."

That fact was not lost on the Haitian people.

One evening, returning from the hospital worksite, the engineers encountered another demonstration. Coming down the other side of the road were marchers as far as the eye could see. Leading the procession, perched atop a truck, was President Aristide. Seeing the engineers, Aristide brought the marchers to a halt and shouted through a megaphone to a crowd.

"These Americans, the ones in the red hats, they are here to help our country," he began. "They are rebuilding our roads, our schools and our hospitals. They are our friends."

The Haitians cheered wildly as the march continued down Harry Truman Boulevard.



Photos courtesy Arkansas National Guard

CARING HANDS - A Naval Reservist (left) takes a vet's blood pressure. Col. Frankie Sears (below, left), the brain and soul behind Operation Care, talks with Arkansas TAG, Maj. Gen. Melvin Thrash.

Arkansas' Operation Care reaches out to help homeless veterans

HELPING their OWN

By Sgt. Jim Cianciolo
Arkansas National Guard

After three days of long hours and hard work, Col. Frankie Sears smiled, realizing that her idea to help veterans and the homeless had become a reality.

"Operation Care" is a program she designed to provide Arkansas' homeless veterans and other people assistance ranging from physical examinations to legal services. Vets were also treated to hot meals, showers, laundry facilities, haircuts, child care, and if needed, overnight accommodations.

As the head nurse for the Arkansas Army Guard's 148th Evacuation Hospital in Little Rock, she came up with the idea after reading an article in *The On Guard* about the Ohio National Guard's efforts to assist homeless veterans.

Sears thought, "We ought to do that for Arkansas' veterans."

That thought turned into many hours tackling obstacles such as federal regulations and company bureaucracies. It also required personal sacrifice.

Taking a six-month leave of absence from her civilian job and working from scratch, Sears implemented a program never before attempted in Arkansas.

Initially, the colonel sold state civilian agencies and companies on the importance of establishing a large-scale exercise that could be used as a road map in case of a community disaster. In addition, she believed soldiers would benefit from working with real patients and solving real problems.

More than 2,500 pairs of shoes were collected. Donated food also was sought and collected. In choosing a location, security and easy access were two factors that had to be considered, not only for the homeless, but for the agencies involved. Owned by the National Bank of Arkansas, the selected property was provided free-of-charge to Operation Care. Major sponsors like Baptist Health, Arkansas Interagency Council on the Homeless and numerous other companies pitched in with money, materials and volunteers.

Sears also enlisted the support of her fellow Guard units. The 148th Evacuation Hospital, 125th Medical Battalion, 212th Signal Battalion and 875th Combat Engineers answered the call. State Air Guard, Naval and Marine Reserve units were also up to the task.

Operation Care was able to enlist more than 1,000 volunteers who occupied the 64 structures used to aid the veterans and homeless.

"I wish there was more that I could do for these people, but if you need to find food to eat, then dental problems become secondary. In the long run you lose your teeth in the fight for survival," said the Arkansas Air Guard's Lt. Col. Norman Flaxman.

Arkansas Gov. Jim Guy Tucker called Operation Care "an excellent example of the National Guard and other agencies working together to help those in need."

As enthusiastic as any soldier working on the ground, Maj. Gen. Melvin C. Thrash, Arkansas' Adjutant General, assisted anyone asking for help.

For three days, dentists, doctors, firemen, nurses, engineers, barbers, factory workers and clerks shared their gifts with those who had very little.

Their reward was the smile of a six-year-old girl getting her first new pair of shoes, or knowing that a veteran had a field jacket for the winter.

What began as one nurse's idea blossomed into the largest field hospital ever constructed in the state of Arkansas.



EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Second only to readiness

The Guard's Equal Opportunity practices are drawing praise from counterparts

By MSgt. John Malthaner
National Guard Bureau

Second only to readiness. That's where equal opportunity falls on the list of priorities to the National Guard's leadership. And if you look at a result of several recent high-level studies, it's an investment worth crowing about.

For more than 20 years, John E. "Jack" Broderick has lived EO. As one of the first race relations officers in the U.S. Army, and recipient of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's Roy Wilkins Service Award, Broderick oversees an EO program that serves nearly 500,000 citizen-soldiers and airmen. His EEO program is responsible for the equal treatment of 53,000 full-time civilian employees.

Last year a DoD task force evaluated each services' EO practices and complaints management programs.

"They liked what they saw in the Guard," Broderick said. "In fact, the Army used our complaints program to radically revamp their own, and it's working well for them."

The praise didn't stop there. Last summer, while many in the country debated the merits of affirmative action, a Presidential review panel conducted a government-wide look into the military's program.

The Panel concluded that, "the military has had broad success in integrating its ranks by emphasizing the widest diversity in its applicant pools and stressing quality."

Broderick acknowledged that the definition of affirmative action is often misunderstood.

"Forced quotas are not the answer," he insisted. "Quotas are fixed, rigid requirements that must be met, or else. They are imposed from above, and because of their inflexible nature, can lead to poor personnel choices and resentment."

"Goals, on the other hand, are targets," he continued. "They are flexible. They

can be and are used as guides to help lead and guide managers to move their organizations in a given direction."

One of the Guard's main EO goals is to see that the ethnic and racial makeup of its force is reflective of its communities.

"Our diversity is our future," Broderick said. "It is apparent that our communities, in terms of people, are changing. Three-quarters of our labor force will be made up of minorities, women and new immigrants. We will have to tap into and develop these talents."

"The very success of our mission will depend upon it."

Today, 14 percent of the Guard's force are African American, 6 percent are Hispanic and 10 percent are women.

Only the number of women is below the Guard's goal. However, according to Broderick, those numbers have seen an

increase since several combat-arms jobs were opened up to women two years ago.

The Guard's goal system isn't the only EO program drawing praise. Its mediation program, created two years ago, has drawn raves from active duty EO observers.

"Mediation is a growing phenomenon," Broderick observed. "It is popular with some court systems where their dockets were being filled up with complaints."

Three years ago, the Guard hired some mediation consultants to train EO managers around the country. It worked.

"We discovered that in many of the complaints (about 85 percent) there were no findings of discrimination," Broderick said. "Usually the problem was a lack of communication or poor management practices. Through mediation we've been able to successfully resolve many cases."

"It's a win-win situation as well," he added. "And, because many mediations are resolved quickly, it lessens the administrative burden on the EO complaint system. It also gets people back to work."

The Guard has seen more EO complaints over the last two years. While that may cause some people in the Pentagon to knee-jerk, Broderick says it's not necessarily a negative indicator.

"I think there is more trust in the system now," he said. "People feel more comfortable coming forward."

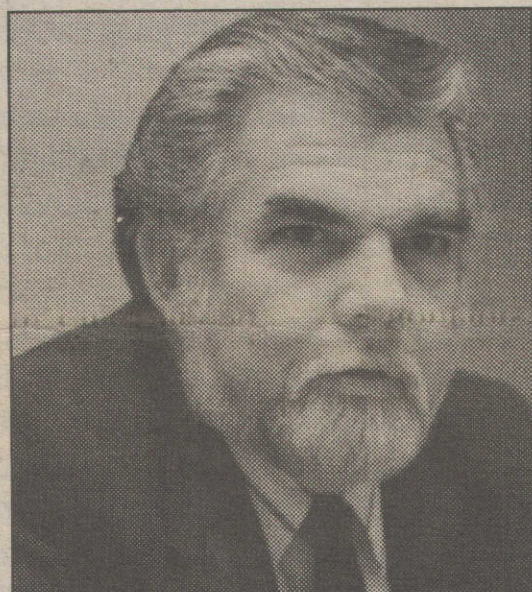


Photo by MSgt. John Malthaner

MOVING FORWARD - National Guard Bureau Equal Opportunity Chief, Jack Broderick (above) has seen many positive changes in the Guard.

Three Air Guardmembers from Maine have stories to tell about their ascension through the ranks

PATHS TO SUCCESS

By Brian Swartz
Bangor Daily News

Women in the military is a hot topic for some, but not in the Maine Air National Guard, where women have been serving with distinction for many years.

Frances Auclair chuckled her rose-colored glasses before joining the Navy in May 1972. She knew what she wanted and realized that the military, then still a male-dominated regime, would "not make life easy for me." But she persevered, and today, as Lt. Col. Auclair, she commands the Maine Air Guard's 101st Support Group.

Auclair attended a college in Boston during the early '70s, when classmates and professors routinely abandoned their classes to protest the Vietnam War. In her junior year, she returned home to Auburn to work, but found that jobs were not plentiful.

Auclair then considered a military enlistment.

"I had truly wanted to get out of Maine and see the world," she said, "and I viewed the military as the chance to travel and get some training."

She whittled her choices down to the Navy and Air Force because, "I thought they offered the best opportunities for training and education." Auclair chose the Navy.

She bore no romantic notions

about military life as she trained to become a medical corpsman.

"I knew I could make the best or worst of it, so I decided to make the best of it," she said. "If the opportunity was presented me, why not take advantage of it?"

Auclair left the Navy in January 1976 and completed a bachelor's degree in elementary education at the University of Southern Maine. She briefly remained in the Naval Reserve. Her naval training also benefited her when she passed the state examination for her LPN's license.

About 18 months passed after Auclair left the Reserves. Different military services, including a Maine Air National Guard recruiter, contacted her about possible service. Desiring a medical slot, she finally agreed to the tour the Air Guard facility in South Portland.

Auclair liked what she saw, but there were no medical slots available. She chose a career in administration and enlisted in the 243rd Engineering and Installation Squadron as a staff sergeant in December 1978.

Since then, Auclair has risen through the ranks to hold command positions in the Maine Air Guard. She earned her commission at the Academy of Military Science in Knoxville, Tenn., and served in the 243rd while teaching full-time for a corporation in Poland Spring. She has worn the uniform full-time since November 1983, after taking a job as a logistics officer with the 101st Air Refueling Wing.

Assigned to other slots with the 101st, Auclair was chosen in August 1992 to attend the Air Command and Staff College in Alabama. During the 11 months she spent there she completed a master's degree in human resources management at Troy State University in Montgomery.

When she returned from Alabama in July 1993, Auclair was assigned to state headquarters as a personnel management officer.

A promotion followed to lieutenant colonel, and earlier this year, she returned to Bangor to command the



Lt. Col. Frances

101st Support Group.

The assignment placed Auclair in a highly visible position, since no other woman held a higher full-time command in the Maine Air National Guard. Eschewing a designation as "trendsetter," she cites hard work, a desire to learn, supportive peers and comrades for her ascent.

"The opportunities afforded me in the Guard have been extraordinary. I have encountered no barriers," Auclair said. "I have received excellent support from my peers. No doors were closed to me. In fact, the same doors are open to women as to men.

"For me it has been an excellent career field," she added.

Auclair stressed that she had encountered no male resistance to her career moves.

"I've never felt excluded from anything. I have never personally felt anything degrading," she said. "My male counterparts have always supported my efforts."

With the Pentagon opening addi-

master sergeant. She can rise no higher in the enlisted ranks, and she's only the second woman to achieve an E-9 rating in the Maine Air National Guard.

LeBlanc set her sights on a military career early in life.

"When I was 18, I wanted to join the Air Force, but my parents wouldn't let me," she recalled.

She ended up fulfilling that dream on Aug. 2, 1978 when she enlisted in the Maine Air Guard.

"I had worked at (a civilian medical company) for 7 1/2 years, and I wanted to get out of the nursing field," LeBlanc said. "I wanted to go into administration. It seemed like it was very interesting. They had a slot (in the Air Guard), so I joined."

Initially trained in administration, LeBlanc took a full-time civil service slot with the 101st Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron in autumn 1979.

Two years later, she landed a full-time Active Guard Reserve (more

attended the ANG Noncommissioned Officers Academy at the same base. She has taken other military courses and, through the Community College of the Air Force, earned an associate's degree in administrative management.

Through the years, LeBlanc has willingly learned "when the opportunity has presented itself."

Currently the support-branch chief for the 101st Communications Flight, she has transferred into different career fields to expand her horizons and open opportunities for advancement. Unaccustomed to computers, she accepted a slot in operations.

"(It required) me to learn how they work, what they do," she said. "I may ask questions, find out how things worked, how to solve computer problems.

"It hasn't been easy, because I'm an administrator by desire and training, but I've learned a lot about the technology," she said.

Her military success has not come easily or without sacrifice. LeBlanc says the hard work has been necessary, especially when she was thrust into a career field where she had little experience.

"I don't think people realize what they can do until they're placed in a challenging situation. I sought out some situations, and some came my way. It's hard work, but it gives you the opportunity to grow," she said. LeBlanc recalled the times that "my co-workers and my peers believed in me when I didn't believe in myself. I've had a lot of support from people."

According to LeBlanc, "this is a profession where you are the only limit to your personal growth. I gained self-confidence in myself and my abilities.

"Believe it or not," she added with a smile, "I used to be very shy. Now, there are people who say I am

not. I learned to speak for myself."

LeBlanc recommends the military.

"It's an excellent career field for young women. But once they get in, they've got to have a goal they want to go for, and they've got to be prepared to change directions to get there."

PARK: Debbie Park joined the Maine Air National Guard to fulfill her dream. She wanted to fly. Now a captain, she navigates KC-135E Stratotankers assigned to the 101st Air Refueling Wing.

"I've always had an interest in

flying at NASA," Park said. Her mother hailed from Houston, Texas, home of the Johnson Space Flight Center.

"When we went there to visit, I'd try to get my parents to take me to see NASA," Park said.

She enlisted in the Maine Air Guard in February 1989 and was commissioned three months later.

The second lieutenant graduated from navigator school at Mather AFB, Calif., and the Air Force's Survival School at Fairchild AFB, Wash.

Her next assignment took her to Castle AFB, Calif., for combat-crew training. She returned to Bangor for orientation in the 101st and helped fly shuttle missions to refuel aircraft bound for the Persian Gulf.

Unlike Auclair and LeBlanc, Park is not a full-time employee at the Bangor base.

"I am fully available to work part-time," she added, "and there is enough work for me to be duly employed."

Park explained that the Air Guard does not maintain a full cadre of flight personnel as would an active Air Force wing. Since the 101st still flies many missions, it always requires air crews and draws their number from the part-timer ranks.

Flashing a smile, Park said, "I'm what you would call a 'Guard bum.' I'm only part-time, like a lot of other people, but I'm available to fly whenever they need me. We provide the Guard with enough air crews to launch a mission on a moment's notice, and we get enough hours to consider it a job.

"It's good for the military," she added, "because they don't have to pay us full-time, only when we are on duty."

Park enthusiastically endorses the military as a career.

"Look at it from the travel aspect alone," she said. "I fly once or twice a week, and I've gone on deployments to places like Italy, England, Germany, the (Panama) Canal Zone.

"You get involved in more different taskings than you would working for a single company in the civilian sector," she added. "No matter your job, you will get an opportunity to advance yourself, to further your training and education."

Park believes that women are treated more equally in the military than in the civilian sector.

"This may be due to the rank structure, because a captain is a captain, no matter the sex," she observed. "But I also think it's due to our mission. We don't have time for foolishness or harassment.

"We fly as a team," Park added. "Each of us depends on the other to land safely."

INE MANAGERS



Auclair



CMSgt. Deborah LeBlanc



Capt. Debbie Park

Photos by Brain Swartz

tional career fields to women, Auclair urges all women to consider a career in the National Guard. The Winterport resident advises women to get a college degree, and then check into the Guard.

"Most women don't realize these opportunities exist, but be prepared," she said. "It's not a job where you do just what needs to be done; with that attitude, you will not last."

LeBLANC: On Aug. 22, 1995, Deborah LeBlanc received her eighth stripe, identifying her as a chief

commonly referred to as AGR) position.

LeBlanc was assigned to the same post.

"If I'd wanted, I could have held similar posts and never done a lot of different work, and still held my rating, but I was there to learn," she recalled. "I wanted to move up, and that involved learning and working."

Tackling her PME (professional military education), LeBlanc completed the four-week Airman Leadership School at McGhee Tyson ANG Base, Knoxville, Tenn., and later

Florida's drug demand reduction program is making a positive difference

By 1st Lt. John Daigle
Florida National Guard

The Florida National Guard has helped law enforcement agencies seize billions of dollars in cash and assets from drug dealers since 1992. Now the Guard is using a share of that money to fight drugs on a second front - in the state's neighborhoods and classrooms.

The Florida Guard is using the drug dealers' own money to launch an innovative new program aimed at reducing the demand for drugs through working partnerships between Guardsmembers, schools and community groups.

And while this campaign involves no tanks or artillery, Florida's Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Ronald Harrison sees it as no less of a war for the citizen-soldiers involved.

"There's no way we can sneak into this effort," Harrison said. "We've got to go into it head first. It's an assault. That's really the only way to look at it."

Still in its infancy, the Florida Guard's Drug Demand Reduction (DDR) program over the last two years has established working relationships with community coalitions in nine communities to include major metropolitan areas such as Miami, Orlando, Tampa, Jacksonville and Tallahassee.

The new programs include youth mentorships, drug awareness programs for at-risk youths and inmates, neighborhood clean-ups, housing renovations, community surveys and numerous other initiatives.

Additionally, more than 17,000 students in 104 high schools around the state have gone through the five-day drug awareness course designed and run by the Florida Guard's drug demand reduction statewide program coordinator Maj. Bob Lewis.

During the course, Guardsmen and women from local units teach high school students -- most of them in junior ROTC -- about drug awareness, personal responsibility and career planning. The Florida National Guard uses drug seizure money to help pay for the course curriculum that offers information students say they don't get anywhere else.

"The program reinforced a lot of the things we'd been taught and it taught us some stuff we didn't know," said 16-year-old junior Nathan Moore of Orange Park High School. "It's the kind of stuff I think kids my age need to hear about."

Lewis' work in taking the Florida Guard's DDR program from concept to reality has also started to attract attention from other states. The Kentucky Guard is modeling its program after Florida's.

"Florida's program is one of the best in the nation," said Lt. Col. Larry Nichols,



Photo by 1st Lt. John Daigle

Taking the fight to the classroom

who works with 54 different drug demand reduction programs nationwide for the National Guard Bureau in Washington D.C. "Maj. Lewis is considered an expert on the subject."

Much of the driving force behind the early success of Florida's program has been Lewis' vision and work, according to civilian officials who have teamed with the Guard on the program. But few of them fully realize why the motivation of the former Infantry officer goes beyond normal professional dedication.

After losing his mother, grandparents and almost his father to smoking-related diseases, Lewis took on the DDR project in 1992 as a kind of personal crusade.

"I had so many tragic personal experiences and I couldn't see any good ever coming from drugs, especially nicotine," Lewis said. "I was looking for a forum to be an activist, to help people avoid getting hooked on drugs or to help people get off drugs."

While Lewis credits Harrison's vision for the success of the program, those who have worked with Lewis say his personal commitment was crucial.

"It's so easy to see how deeply Maj. Lewis believes in what he's doing," said Col. David Ammons, the senior Army JROTC instructor in Florida. "That's what has made the difference."

With the Cold War over and the National Guard competing for its share of a decreasing defense budget, it's more important than ever for Florida Guard units to support their local communities and vice versa, Harrison said.

"You can fly all the federal missions you want," he said. "You can run through the woods all day and night. But you put one picture in the newspaper about helping the community fight crime or helping them with a kids' project and you've sold the community."

"That's what gets the National Guard support," he added.

Miami provides an excellent example of the mutual benefits that come from a

good relationship between the Guard and a community, said Marilyn Culp, executive director of the Miami Coalition for a Safe and Drug Free Community.

In 1994, the Miami Coalition and the Florida Guard kicked-off their new-found partnership by mustering 800 volunteers to rebuild Lauren Park in one of the poorest neighborhoods in the country.

"The Guardsmen brought tents, they brought food, they prepared the food and helped in so many other ways," Culp said. "It's been amazing to me that whatever we need they get it done."

The biggest challenge in building partnership between the Guard and communities was finding the true priorities of each separate city, Lewis said.

The Guard discovered those community priorities by working through the state's community coalitions -- each comprised of church leaders, law enforcement representatives, elected officials and civic groups.

"By dealing with the coalitions we are doing what the communities feel is important," Lewis said. "They are telling us what they need us to do."

Maryann Andrews with the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Central District of Florida helped Lewis establish the early links between the Guard and the existing community coalitions.

"The Florida National Guard provides role models for our communities and that's something we desperately need in this country right now," she said. "We've got so many people who don't even have time for their own kids and then you look at the Guard. They not only make time for their own families and jobs, but as citizen-soldiers they volunteer more of their time."

Working with the coalitions, the Florida Guard has taken up several new community initiatives in the last three years that are outside the realm of its normal state and federal missions.

These programs include several Guard adopt-a-school partnerships, summer

BEST PITCH - Florida DDR coordinator, Maj. Bob Lewis, talks to students about being drug-free.

campus for at-risk youths, drug awareness programs for inmates, neighborhood clean-up and graffiti removal projects, youth mentorship programs, weed-and-seed neighborhood development projects and renovations of homes for the poor.

"My focus has shifted from fighting a cold war overseas to fighting a community-based war in Jacksonville," said Col. Craig McKinley, commander of the Florida Air National Guard's 125th Fighter Wing in Jacksonville. "Our children are at risk not only with drug abuse but with crime in the streets. I think it's essential that the National Guard now be involved with these problems."

Peer pressure is not always a bad thing, Sgt. Daniel Hermany told a class of about 15 seniors and juniors recently. "Positive peer pressure can accomplish good things, like making it easier for your friends to get off drugs."

Through 90 minutes classes, Hermany never preaches. He jokes. He jumps. He stretches to hold the students' interest.

"I was surprised at how much I actually learned," said 17-year-old Zoe Dailey, a senior at one of the four Jacksonville-area schools where Hermany teaches his course. "Sgt. Hermany talks to the class on a level we could relate to. He's more a friend than a teacher."

A 1994 survey of 5,307 Florida high school students who took the week-long Guard DDR course showed 99.3 percent of the students rated their instructors as good, outstanding or excellent. Ninety percent said they thought the course helped them better understand the dangers of drugs.

About 60 percent of the students attending the classes in Florida are considered "at-risk" students, Lewis added.

With all the school and community initiatives that now fall under the Florida Guard DDR umbrella, the program reached an estimated 21,640 youths last year. The program has already received the National Guard Association of the United States annual award for being the best Guard school program in the nation in 1994. And, says Lewis, it is just now beginning to catch on.

Gov. Lawton Chiles has praised the program and called it a "major force" in helping fight drug use in Florida.

"The Guard has a tremendous role in our state as educators and mentors and community leaders," he said.

Expanding the program to other cities across the state is one of Lewis' main goals, but he said quantity is not what's important.

"If we were to help five kids this year I'd consider the program working," Lewis said. "I really believe in this. I don't go in there playing games and saying things are OK. Things are not OK."

"As a role model we are doing something in these schools," he added. "We are having an impact, and it's the right thing to do."

Carolínians
hammer
away at
Israeli
facilities,
friendships

Building relations

By Maj. Fred Monk
South Carolina National Guard

MSgt. Bob Ferguson relaxed for a moment under the Negev Desert sun in Israel and assessed the impact of two weeks of training with an Israeli civil engineering unit.

"The experience of working with the Israelis is invaluable in case we ever have to work in a situation like this again," he said.

Ferguson was among a group of 48 South Carolina Air National Guard's 169th Civil Engineering Squadron engineers who deployed to Israel to perform work with their foreign counterparts.

They were so effective that the Israeli engineers were asking not if, but how soon, the South Carolínians could come back.

"You did a very fine job. It was kind of a breeze wind to us," said Maj. Miri Weinsten, the Israeli civil engineering liaison officer. "We have learned to work in a new situation and with a different language."

The language barrier was easily overcome by using hand signals said MSgt. Tommy Watts.

The 169th was assigned a multitude of projects, ranging from repairing water-damaged modular living quarters (called "hooches" by the Israelis), to rebuilding a washed out perimeter road important to base security.

When the civil engineers left McEntire they had little idea of what work to expect. The new cultural environment was also a challenge.

One of those challenges required a group of 169th plumbers to adapt to Israeli methods of measuring, cutting and threading pipe to install a compressed-air system at a hangar.

A group of heavy-machine operators drew praise from their Israeli section leader. The team not only spread 25,000 tons of gravel and graded out a five-kilometer portion of a perimeter road, but they also moved tons of earth to create a new settlement pond for the base waste treatment system.

MEASURING UP - South Carolina's MSgt. Harold Yelton (left) sizes up a door frame in Israel.

The sand they pushed was silt-like and the dust was thick. As they moved the sand, their machines produced mini-sandstorms that clouded the area.

The carpenters had to endure the worst working conditions. They labored in confined quarters repairing water-damaged flooring in the makeshift barracks that once had been used by those who constructed the base.

169th engineers not only met their goal of repairing 15 hooches, but they also repaired flooring in the base kindergarten and constructed offices in the civil engineering building and clinic.

Using drawings from an Israeli military draftsman, the carpenters reconstructed offices in the civil engineering headquarters, including built-in desks, cabinets and new flooring.

One group of electricians put together scores of electrical extension cords as well as temporary wiring at the base pool where a change of command ceremony was held.

The deployment wasn't without other inconveniences. They endured the heat, a steady diet of repetitious kosher foods and near-field conditions.

Despite the lengthy flights over and back and the changes in lifestyle, the group found the 16-day deployment very rewarding.

Working a Sunday-to-Thursday schedule to correspond to the Israel workweek, members of the group used their time off to explore the country.

A bus excursion for 35 members of the unit to Jerusalem and Tel Aviv included a pistol-packing rabbi who guided the civil engineers through the meandering and narrow streets of Old Jerusalem along the Via Dolorosa, to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and then to the Wailing Wall.

The hospitality of the Israelis was matchless. They arranged tours to the Israeli Air Force Museum, to the Masada at the Dead Sea, the Bedouin Cultural Center and trips to the nearby cities of Beer Sheba and Arad.

The hospitality extended to South Carolina Guard members being invited to the homes of their new found Israeli friends.

A strong rapport grew over the two weeks. By the time the tour of duty was over, it was easy to say, "Shalom."

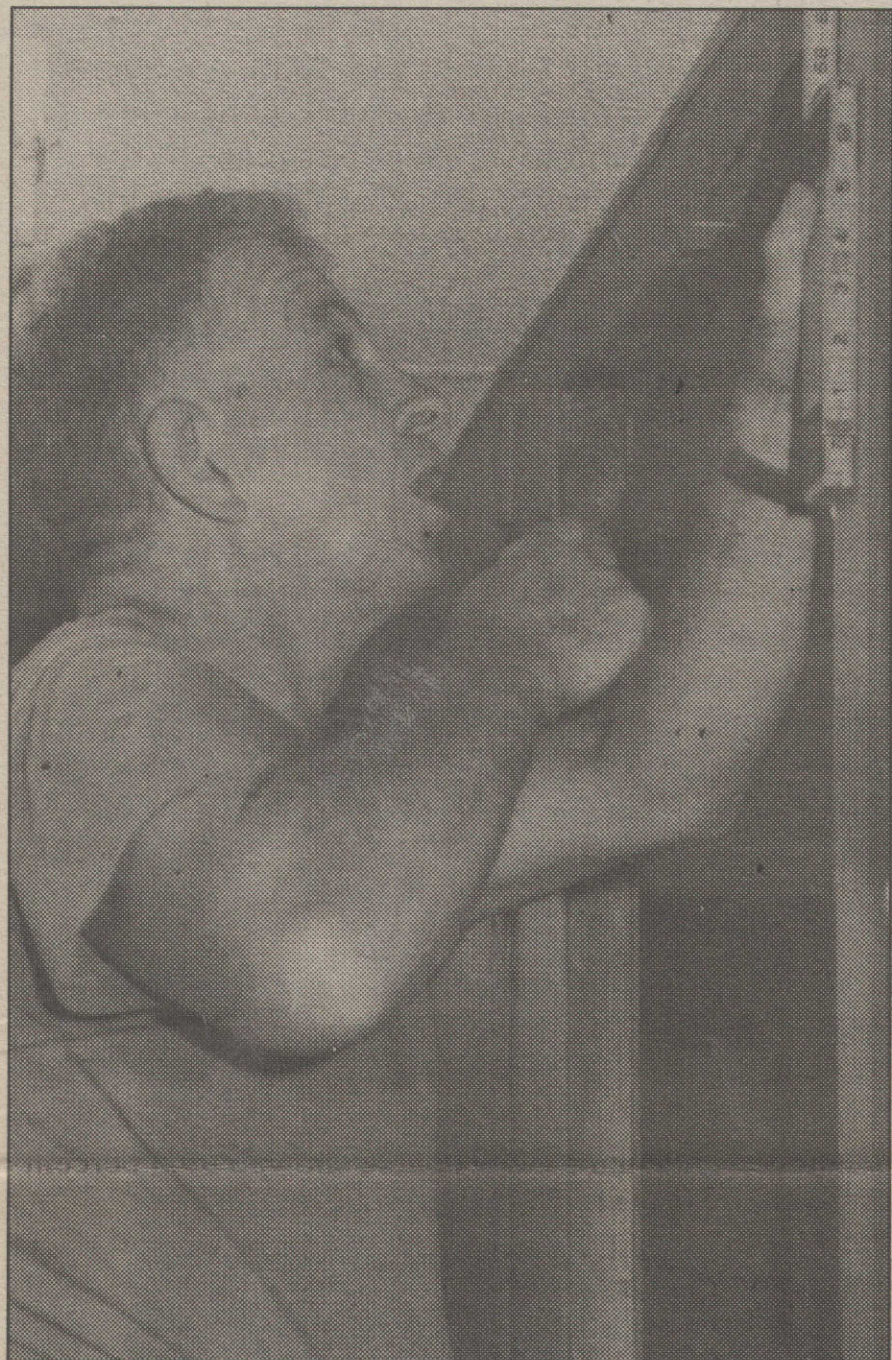


Photo courtesy of the Israeli Air-Force

BUILDING the BODY

Members of the Utah Army Guard's 115th Engineer Detachment discuss plans to build a fitness center at Camp Zama, Japan. The engineers recently returned from Japan after constructing two locker-rooms, a storage room, a lounge and sauna. No strangers to foreign soil, the 115th has helped build a school in Honduras and renovate a medical facility in Africa. The unit has also helped build bathrooms for the Utah Forest Service.



Photo by Spc. Jennifer Koentop

NEWS

MAKERS

Compiled by MSgt. John Malthaner
National Guard Bureau

Soldiers formerly from North Carolina's Company D, 2nd Battalion, 252nd Armor made a successful transition from tankers to artillerymen at Fort Bragg, N.C. firing their first M109A3 Howitzer recently. The guncrew wrote the names of their loved ones on the first 155mm round they expended. The Tarheel State citizen-soldiers now belong to Detachment 1, Bravo Battery, 1st Battalion, 113th Field Artillery.

Members of the Massachusetts Army Guard's Battery C, 1st Battalion, 101st Field Artillery took part in a cleanup effort along the Cook Pond shoreline as part of Operation Greenguard. Dozens of shopping carts, tires, auto parts, trash and other debris was hauled away. The operation is a combined effort between the National Guard, the Navy and area residents.

The 106th Rescue Wing, a New York Air Guard unit that has been providing search and rescue missions since 1975, swore-in Mary Jane Van Horst recently as its first female pilot.

Alabama's 187th Fighter Wing in Montgomery was awarded its fourth Air Force Outstanding Unit Award. The unit was cited for its successful conversion from F-16A/B jets to the F-16C/D model. The 187th was also involved in deployments to Korea, Norway, England and Turkey. The latter was in support of Operation Provide Comfort.

The South Carolina Air Guard's SrA. John "J.J." Jones recently received the Air Force's Aircrew Saver Award for his actions during Operation Deny Flight in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Assigned to the parachute shop as a survival equipment specialist in Aviano, Italy, Jones packed the chute Capt. Scott O'Grady used when he was forced to eject from his F-16.

TSgt. George Gildner, a member of the Arkansas Air Guard's 189th Airlift Wing, designed and developed a navigational sextant mount mock-up device. The invention is used to provide navigators hands-on training on the installation procedures for a sextant mount assembly. Gildner's device, say 189th officials, will save time and money.

Massachusetts' 104th Maintenance Squadron was recently selected as the recipient of the Air National Guard's Outstanding Aircraft Maintenance Award. The 104th flies A-10 Warthogs. The squadron will now compete for the coveted Daedalian Maintenance Award against other top maintainers in the U.S. Air Force and Reserves.

The Kentucky Army Guard's Susanne Curtis is the first woman to attain the rank of chief warrant officer five in the Army National Guard. CWO5 Curtis was promoted Jan. 26.

The Iowa Army Guard's Army Aviation Support Facility 2, based in Waterloo, marked 500 consecutive days without a lost-time accident. Facility commander Maj. Matt Salmon celebrated the occasion with a cake.



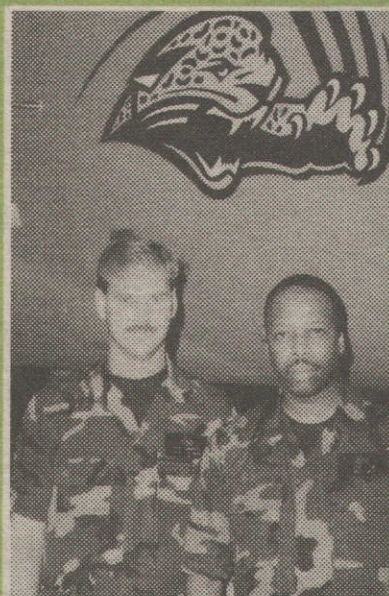
Soldiers with North Carolina's Company D, 2-252nd Armor fire away.



Sgt. Joe Furna (left) helps cleanup Cook Pond.



CBS humorist and newsman Roger Welch boards an Iowa Guard fighter.



SSgt. Paul Naydeck (left) and TSgt. Larry Amos paint a jaguar on an F-15 Eagle.

Kansas' Lt. Col. Kenneth Barnard was recently awarded the prestigious Kansas Governor's Aviation Honor Award given to Kansans who "persevere the memory of outstanding aviation contributions by the citizens of Kansas." Barnard, the commander of the Army Guard's 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation is also the head of Kansas State University's Salina Aeronautics Department. Barnard was cited by the Kansas State University president for getting his department a \$7.7 million grant.

The National Guard Professional Education Center in Arkansas was recognized by state Gov. Jim Guy Tucker for its commitment to excellence, receiving the Arkansas Quality Award.

Maryland Gov. Parris Glendening presented the Free State National Guard a first place gold award at the third annual Quality Awards. "At every level our organization has demonstrated a strong commitment to the implementation of continuous quality improvement principles and techniques," said Maj. Gen. James Fretterd, Maryland's Adjutant General. "The ultimate result -- continuous quality service -- has been realized."

Maj. Debbie Mears recently became the Florida Army Guard's first woman to assume a brigade-level position when she was chosen as the 53rd Infantry Brigade's administrative officer. The brigade, in existence for 27 years, is the largest unit in Florida with nearly 3,500 soldiers assigned. It is headquartered at Fort Homer Hesterly Armory in Tampa.

Capt. Gordon Oglesby, a chaplain with the Texas Army National Guard's 3rd Battalion, 133rd Field Artillery, was awarded the Omar N. Bradley Award. The award is given annually to Texas soldiers, active and Reserve, who exemplify outstanding performance.

Brig. Gen. Jan P. Johnson, the Puerto Rico Air Guard's chief of staff, recently retired after 31 years of service. Johnson enlisted in the Puerto Rico National Guard in 1964 and was commissioned the following year. Prior to his present assignment, Johnson served as commander of the 156th Tactical Fighter Group.

Roger Welch, known by CBS Sunday Morning viewers for his popular "Postcards from Nebraska" segment recently featured Col. Tom Kammerer, a member of the Iowa Air Guard's 185th Fighter Wing in Sioux City, Iowa. Kammerer, a Desert Storm pilot who runs an 800-acre farm in Leshara, Neb., spent two days with Welch. Welch, noted for his homespun humor, asked one favor of the 185th for putting them on national TV. "You can show your appreciation by having all Iowa ANG pilots from now on wearing overalls," he said.

Florida's TSgt. Larry Amos and SSgt. Paul Naydeck, members of the 125th Fighter Wing in Jacksonville, recently painted a jaguar "slasher" logo (copied from pro football's Jacksonville Jaguars) on one of its F-15 Eagles.

SNOWED IN

Before the blizzard, New Yorkers were busy in Buffalo

By 2nd Lt. Kathryn Poynton
New York National Guard

More than 160 western New York Army National Guard soldiers were activated following Buffalo's worst weather emergency in more than a decade.

Troops from the Buffalo-based Headquarters Detachment, 42nd Engineer Brigade and 152nd Engineer Battalion were called up in the middle of the night on Sunday, Dec. 10, to help the city battle a record breaking snowfall which had paralyzed the city.

On Dec. 9, according to meteorologist David Sage of the National Weather Service, a six-mile wide band of snow swept over Lake Erie and Buffalo "dead on." More than 37 inches fell over the next 24 hours, shattering the previous 23-inch record in 1982 by more than 14 inches. By Dec. 11, more than 57 inches had fallen for the season -- 40 inches above normal for this time of year.

Traffic stopped, emergency vehicles became trapped and city snow plow crews were often blinded by white-out conditions.

Buffalo Mayor Anthony Masiello contacted the Gov. George Pataki's office in Albany when it became apparent that the effects of the storm were beyond the city's ability to handle alone. It took a record breaking storm to make Buffalo, a city accustomed to heavy snow, to ask for help. The Governor activated the Guard soon after.

The State Emergency Management Office directed and coordinated the efforts of the Guard. The New York State Department of Transportation and other state agencies also provided support.

"Even as the snow was beginning to fall we anticipated the activation," said Maj. Charles McNeil, 152nd's acting commander. "During the drill weekend we geared up our vehicles and kept key personnel on hand after the drill was over. We were ready."

The unit had been activated for snow removal operations during the blizzard of 1977 and the snow emergency of 1982.

"It was drill weekend and we had soldiers on hand," said Lt. Col. John Shubuck, acting brigade commander. "The activation began late on Sunday and by evening



Photo by Maj. Paul Fanning



Photo by SSgt. Raymond Drumsta

KNEE DEEP - A loader with the 152nd Engineer Battalion (left) piles snow. A loader (below) fills a city of Buffalo truck.

our equipment and personnel were ready and missions were planned."

By 2 a.m. Dec. 11, the troops had begun round-the-clock shifts to help the Buffalo Public Works Department clear the streets.

Mayor Masiello later praised the Guard for its rapid response.

"The Guard had 140 to 160 troops and more than 40 pieces of equipment ready much sooner than we had hoped," he said.

According to Capt. Wayne West, the 152nd's Headquarters Company commander, the 42 pieces included loaders, 5-ton dump trucks, graders and Small Equipment Excavators. They were used to push, shovel and carry away tons of snow.

"Phase one was to clear emergency routes and fire hydrants. Phase two was a curb-to-curb clean up," West said. "The snow was then transported to designated sites and piled."

"We are doing what the Guard does best," said Shubuck, "helping our community."

The community agreed.

"The enthusiasm of the Guard troops and their commitment is just terrific," said Steve Bank, the mayor's press officer. "Our city employees actually work better when the troops are nearby."

"If it wasn't for the National Guard we wouldn't have been dug out," he added.

Kenny Kupczyk, a Buffalo resident, cheered when 5-ton trucks passed in front of his Hopkins Road residence. The troops regularly exchanged friendly salutes and were a favorite pastime for onlookers. One local grocery store provided free coffee, soup, pizza and hot dogs to soldiers taking warm-up breaks.

"The National Guard is doing a tremendous job," said Gov. Pataki, who flew in from Albany to tour the city and see the storm's effects first hand. He thanked soldiers who greeted him at the South Park snow dumping site and praised their efforts to reporters.

"As always, the Guard has risen to the challenge," said Pataki.

New York's SSgt. Raymond Drumsta and Maj. Paul Fanning contributed to this story.



STATES

- New Institute
- Bosnia Bound
- Peak Performers

ARIZONA

More than 20 soldiers and five helicopters responded to a remote desert locale when an Amtrak train was derailed off a 30-foot high bridge recently.

Guard helicopters flew more than 50 sorties transporting injured passengers to staging areas where emergency vehicles waited.

TEXAS

Soldiers with Company G, 143rd Infantry, made a splash recently when they participated in a deliberate waterborne parachute insertion for the first time in a decade.

The soldiers jumped from a CH-47 Chinook into Canyon Lake, located on Fort Sam Houston. The last time they performed a water jump was November 1986, in Denmark.

NEW MEXICO

The ribbon was cut at the New Mexico Regional Training Institute recently. The ceremony also marked the groundbreaking for the state's National Guard headquarters.

The \$3.5 million institute will be charged with the responsibility of meeting the training needs of citizen-soldiers from nine states.

VIRGINIA

Sixty-nine members of the 192nd Fighter Wing in Sandston took their F-16s to Hickam AFB, Hawaii, to participate in exercise Sentry Aloha.

FOR the CAUSE

Wisconsin Air Guard's Lt. Col. Jerry Olesen, a member of the 115th Fighter Wing, helps load beer destined for U.S. troops in Bosnia. The Wing helped transport foodstuffs donated by businesses and citizens of Eau Claire-Chippewa Falls. Some of the items were Wisconsin cheese, bottled water, hot cocoa mix, fudge and cookies.



Photo by Larry Sommers

PENNSYLVANIA

Seventy-two members of the 193rd Special Operations Wing in Harrisburg recently returned from Osan AB, Korea, after participating in Exercise Foal Eagle and successfully transitioning to the Commando Solo aircraft.

It was the first time the aircraft was used in the exercise.

MISSISSIPPI

The 1st Battalion, 204th Air Defense Artillery received the first Avenger air defense weapon system in the National Guard recently.

The Avenger, a premier shoot-on-the-move weapon, is a highly mobile vehicle with eight Stinger surface-to-air missiles and a .50 caliber machine gun mounted to it.

The ceremony also marked the official activation of the 1-204th. They were formerly 4th Battalion, 114th Field Artillery.

COLORADO

Members of the Pueblo-based Company B, 5th Battalion, 19th Special Forces Group successfully scaled three 14,000 foot peaks in a single day.

Unit members needed less than eight hours to cover a 9.5 mile hike conquering Mounts Lincoln, Cameron and Bross.

"Standing on top of a 14,000-foot peak gave me a sense of accomplishment that made me forget about the pain," said SSgt. Blair Donaldson.

IOWA

The Sioux Gateway Airport in Sioux City, Iowa, was the site of many B-17 crashes during the years of World War II when it was one of the largest B-17 training bases in the country. That was then.

Recently, a Flying Fortress had been on a nationwide "Salute to Veterans '95 Tour" and was returning to nearby Norfolk, Neb., when problems began. The left landing gear would not go down. Pilot John Rising decided to divert to Sioux City because of its longer, 10,000-foot runway and its full-time fire department.

Fire protection at the Sioux Gateway Airport is provided by the Iowa Air National Guard's 185th Fighter Wing.

"I couldn't believe it," recalled Fire Chief James Hathaway. "I asked if they were sure it was a B-17. We definitely don't get too many of those here."

Rising reported he had 1,000 pounds of fuel on

board and asked that foam be put on the runway.

"We didn't put foam down," said Hathaway. "It's not something we do anymore, but we had it ready if there was a fire."

As the plane lined up on the runway with only one wheel down, the pilot shut off the electrical power making it invisible in the night sky. He touched down as Hathaway and his crew watched.

"He made a perfect landing on that one wheel," said Hathaway. "Then when the plane slowed down the left wing dropped, turned 180 degrees and stopped. All the people evacuated the aircraft and there was no fire."

Rising praised the 185th Fire Department.

"They were great," he said. "The Fire Department and everyone at the Guard were very helpful. It's one of those times when you can't say enough about them."



Photo by SMSgt. Pat Kenally

SAFELY GROUNDED - Firefighters with the Iowa's Air Guard's 185th Fighter Wing pose in front of the crippled B-17.



HISTORY

Guard African Americans have distinguished themselves in war

PROUD SERVICE

By Lt. Col. Leonid Kondratiuk
NGB Historian

African Americans have served in the militia since the earliest days. Black minutemen fired the first shots of the American Revolution at Lexington and Concord in April 1775. Colonial laws barring free blacks from serving in the militia were often overlooked.

The Militia Act of 1792 restricted militia service to whites and effectively kept blacks out of the militia. Blacks were also excluded from the Army as well. With the growth of the volunteer militia in the 1850s, a number of patriotic blacks interested in military affairs formed uniformed clubs with the intention of mustering into the militia. State governors, even sympathetic ones, could not legally accept these organizations into the militia due to federal law.

After the first year of the Civil War, President Lincoln decided to change the law to allow blacks to serve in the militia and the Army. Despite continued prejudice against African Americans serving in the Army, the Militia Act was changed to allow blacks to serve in the militia as well as on active duty since state volunteer regiments were organized by the states under militia laws. The first African American unit authorized by the War Department was the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment, featured in the 1989 film, *Glory*.

The 54th was mustered into the Army in May 1863 and deployed to South Carolina to take part in the federal siege of Charleston. The 54th electrified both the North and the South in July 1863 when the regiment attacked and nearly captured Fort Wagner. The 54th suffered 42 percent casualties. With their blood, black soldiers proved to friend and foe that they could fight as well as anyone.

While the Commonwealth of Massachusetts was the first to organize black regiments for the Union Army, it was also the first to organize a black militia unit. In September 1863, the first African American National Guard unit was established in Boston under the command of Capt. Lewis Gaul. The organization of the

Unattached Company of Infantry, MVM was significant both in African American history as well as National Guard history. From 1863 on, black Guardsmen, despite prejudice and discrimination, would always serve in the National Guard. After the Civil War a number of states organized African American National Guard units.

In 1878 the Massachusetts infantry company was redesignated as Company L, 6th Infantry. Massachusetts was the only state to allow a black unit to serve in a white regiment. Another important Guard distinction was that black units were commanded by black officers, unlike similar units of the Army.

The soldiers of Company L were mobilized with the rest of the 6th Mass. Infantry during the Spanish American War in 1898 and deployed to Puerto Rico. The regimental commander was ordered to transfer Company L out of the 6th to a black regiment but refused.

Company L was mobilized again in April 1917 for World War I. The Boston Guardsmen were assigned to a new regiment, the 372nd Infantry. It was made up of Black Guard units from Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Ohio, Tennessee and Massachusetts. The 372nd, with the 370th of Illinois and the 369th of New York, was nominally assigned to the 93rd Division which was planned to be an all-black National Guard division. However, the 93rd was never fully activated, instead the 372nd was assigned to the French Army since the US Army did not want any black combat units. The 372nd Infantry fought in three campaigns during the war and impressed their French division commander with their coolness under fire. For its gal-



Photo courtesy of the 272nd Field Artillery Battalion Veterans Association

lantry, Company L, and the other companies of the 372nd, were decorated with the Croix de Guerre.

After the war, NGB authorized the reorganization of the 372nd Infantry as a national black regiment with companies in Ohio, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey and the District of Columbia. The Massachusetts portion was designated as the 3rd Battalion.

The Massachusetts Guardsmen were mobilized in March 1941. When war was declared in December 1941, the 372nd was assigned to guard vital installations in the greater New York City area. While guarding docks and power plants was important in the first few months of the war, the Boston Guardsmen wanted to see action.

When the Army activated the all-black 92nd and 93rd Infantry Divisions, the 372nd expected to be one of the regiments in the new divisions. Instead, the 372nd conducted basic training for draftees and provided officers and NCOs as cadre for new units. Col. Edward Gourdin, a Harvard-educated lawyer who had commanded

PROUD HERITAGE - Members of the Massachusetts Guard's Headquarters Battery, 272nd Field Artillery Battalion (below) pose at Camp Edwards in 1949.

Boston's 3rd Battalion prior to the war, took command of the 372nd in 1942. The regiment continued its tradition of being commanded by black officers.

In the spring of 1945, the 372nd was alerted for overseas service. Hoping to see action in the Pacific, the regiment arrived in Hawaii in April and was assigned to defend Oahu. While not destined to see combat, Boston's African American Guardsmen did have the satisfaction of training some 10,000 young black soldiers for overseas service.

After the war, Boston's black community asked the Adjutant General of Massachusetts to reorganize the 372nd. However, NGB did not want any units to cross state lines. It offered the 177th Tank Battalion to Massachusetts as its black unit since the Guard and the Army were still segregated. Because the armory could not house Sherman tanks, the unit designation and mission was changed to the 272nd Field Artillery Battalion. Many 372nd veterans rejoined the unit and began recruiting. Col. Gourdin voluntarily accepted a reduction in rank to lieutenant colonel in order to command the battalion. With the help of the community, the battalion's strength grew to 375, even though it was authorized 680 soldiers.

With the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950, the 272nd was alerted for mobilization. As a 155mm howitzer battalion, the 272nd was mobilized in September 1950 and moved to Camp McCoy, Wis., and began conducting training as the unit was brought to full strength.

President Truman's 1948 order to integrate the Army was very slow in implementation. At Camp McCoy, 272nd soldiers felt discrimination in the way they were treated. All black units were concentrated at one end of the post while black soldiers were told to use only one of three service clubs. In August 1951, Lt. Col.

Karl Russell, who had served in the unit for 27 years, was relieved along with 13 of his officers.

An African American newspaper began the story with the headline, "Railroaded." The officers were reassigned, ostensibly, because they were not qualified field artillery officers. While most of the officers were infantrymen in World War II, they had all attended artillery courses.

With all the media attention, the Army quickly sent the unit to Germany. As the Guardsmen completed their service they returned to Boston as the Army began integrating the 272nd. By the end of 1952 the 272nd was a typical Army unit. Blacks could join any unit they wanted.

While this was progress, the 272nd's proud history as an all-black unit ended. However, its memory still lives within the 272d Field Artillery Battalion Veterans Association.

"As long as we're alive, there will always be a 272nd," said Browne, the Association's President.



TRAINING

Guardmembers bring Christmas and presents to children who never owned toys

PANAMA over the HOLIDAYS

By 2nd Lt. Angi Bowman
Illinois National Guard

To 34 grade school-children in the tiny, remote village of Los Faldares in Panama, Santa Claus wears Army boots and camouflage.

Accustomed to Christmas without gifts or celebration, the children of Los Faldares had the opportunity to share in the holiday spirit when 16 National Guard citizen-soldiers traveled to Los Faldares to deliver Christmas cheer from several U.S. military posts located along the Panama Canal.

In mid-December, Santa Claus entered the village -- not in a sleigh pulled by reindeer, but in the bed of a rumbling two and one-half ton military truck filled with toys, schoolbooks and school supplies.

As the Guard soldiers from Illinois, New Mexico, Alabama and Minnesota unloaded the back of the vehicle, the air was filled with the excited screams and chatter of children.

Though none of the children spoke English, and only three of the citizen-soldiers spoke Spanish, the children's eagerness was obvious as their hands reached up to the vehicle for their gifts.

For New Mexico Army Guard's PFC Patricia Villanueva, a clerical specialist with the 642nd Maintenance Company based in Las Cruces, the highlight of her overseas deployment was meeting the children.

"All of them were so excited about the toys," she said. "They all wanted to help carry the boxes. It didn't matter if they were heavy or not, these kids just wanted to help."

Seeing the children happy and excited was also a satisfying experience for Alabama Army Guard's SSgt. Julia Irby, from the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 122nd Support Group, based in Selma, Ala.

"To see them laughing and playing makes me feel good," Irby said.



SANTA's HELPERS - Alabama Army Guard's SSgt. Julia Irby (left) passes out presents to children of Los Faldares, Panama. Spc. Laqueta Conerly (below, far left) and PFC Patricia Villanueva play "Ring-Around-the-Rosie" with children.



Photos by 2nd Lt. Angi Bowman

Alabama Army Guard's Spc. Laqueta Conerly, a telecommunications specialist with the 135th Supply and Service Company in Jasper, Ala., said she thought of her 13-year-old daughter.

"After meeting these children, I think about how easy my daughter has it. My daughter will be able to get all the education she wants, while these kids have a hard time even getting pencils to write with," she said with tears in her eyes.

The school children of Los Faldares ranged in age from four to 13. During the course of the day teachers said they attempted to tailor their instruction to the wide-age range.

"I was told before I came out here that all of the children attend class at the same time, and that after 13, education in the local communities stops at sixth grade," Conerly said.

"If they want to continue their education they have to go into a larger city," she added. "Transportation is so hard to come by for some of the people here that many of them don't continue school."

Illinois Army National Guard's SFC David Lemme, a first sergeant and photographer for the 139th Public Affairs Detachment from Springfield, Ill., said he understood the need for families and communities to support every aspect of education -- from transportation to basic supplies.

"The toys and supplies that we brought out to the children of this community demonstrate the importance we place on educational opportunities for all children," said Lemme, a resident of Williamsville, Ill., and a school board member in his district.

After the toys were distributed, the children went inside their tiny two-room country schoolhouse to take several swings at two pinatas the citizen-soldiers had donated. It didn't take long for the

pinatas -- one resembling Frosty the Snowman and another that looked like Santa Claus -- to burst after a few well-aimed whacks with a stick. Candy scattered across the floor as eager hands reached out to grab as many sweets as their little fingers could hold.

The children entertained the soldiers with Spanish songs and poems about the history of their country -- something they're taught in school. The citizen-soldiers returned the gesture of friendship by singing *Jingle Bells* in English.

For Illinois Army Guard's Sgt. Jim Burk, a videographer for the 139th, being a part of the afternoon's festivities reminded him of the importance of sharing in the Christmas spirit.

"The smiles on the children's faces as we listened to their poems and then sang our own songs made the day a special one for me," he said. "I was very proud to be a part of something that touched the lives of these children."

The children reached out to the soldiers by teaching Irby, Villanueva and Conerly a game similar to "Ring-Around-the-Rosie." Villanueva, whose parents were born in Mexico, said she could relate.

"We used to play these games when I was little. We used to visit Mexico a lot, and I learned these games there," Villanueva said. "The children who come from villages like this have to come up with their own games because they don't have toys to entertain them."

"But these toys we brought today are new to these children and are something that each will cherish," she added.

This is the fifth year for the annual Christmas Sponsorship Program. Since the inception of the program in 1990, thousands of Panamanian citizens have received various gifts from school supplies to Christmas toys.

"We take part in this program because

we want to strengthen the rapport with the people of Panama," said Michigan Army Guard's 1st Lt. Francisco Mata. "We chose this particular school because we had already begun developing a relationship with the people here."

"The National Guard repaired the school itself and built the road leading into the village as a part of Operation Fuertes Caminos (Spanish meaning *strong roads*) in 1995," he added.

Los Faldares School Principal Anayansi Mendoza, also one of the school's two teachers, said the citizen-soldiers' gifts and donated school supplies meant a lot to the children and adults in the village.

"What the soldiers brought into the community were things the children have never had before. This was their first Christmas," she said. "They have never had a toy before."

As one of the soldiers who spoke Spanish, Mata said the townspeople were overwhelmed by what they had seen.

"The people I spoke with said they didn't expect us to bring out as many supplies and toys as we did," he said. "They wanted to make sure that we continue to come here over the next few years."

Los Faldares residents showed their appreciation by serving a lunch of rice and fresh chicken cooked Panamanian-style over an open flame.

For all the Guardmembers who brought the joy of Christmas to a tiny, remote village in Panama, the experience was one they will never forget.

"When I came here I didn't know what to expect," Irby said. "But everyone was so happy. It really felt like Santa Claus had been here for these children."

"These children are not just children from Panama," she added, "these children belong to all of us."