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THE ON GUARD

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April 1995

California calls Guard again

*Bureau Chief a witness
to another Golden State
Guard flood mobilization*

When Lt. Gen. Edward D. Baca, chief, National Guard Bureau, accepted an invitation to an Association of the U.S. Army conference in San Francisco March 10-12, little did he know that Northern California would be struck by torrential rainstorms that same weekend.

For the beleaguered and now water-logged state, it was one more in a series of natural disasters.

For Baca, it was an opportunity to witness the California Guard responding to another state emergency.

"This is just one example of how our troops are prepared. It shows how we can perform when called upon," said Baca. "We did it in the Persian Gulf, and we continue to do it today with a dedicated and well-trained force."

Brig. Gen. Robert Brandt, California's assistant adjutant general, and members of the 140th Aviation Brigade, greeted Baca at the Sonoma County Airport, an evacuation point located 65 miles north of San Francisco.

Soldiers who saved lives in both recent storms, explained weather conditions and outlined the California Guard's role in efforts to assist flood victims.

On a damage-assessment flight, Baca got a chance to see the flooded areas along the Russian River in Sonoma, where the storms caused extensive damage to roads, bridges and residential areas.

The flooding was some of the worst California has experienced in decades—prompting Governor Pete Wilson to request President Bill Clinton declare 48 of the state's 58 counties as federal disaster areas.

According to published reports, seven days of storms dumped up to 10 1/2 inches of rain in some locations, killed at least 14 people and caused an estimated \$2 billion in damage.

Many of the areas weren't fully recovered from January's flooding.

In all, more than 300 California Army and Air Guardmembers were mobilized to perform nearly 50 missions. Guardmembers were dispatched throughout the state.

As usual, they worked with local authorities and county sheriffs and other emergency relief agencies such as the American Red Cross.

Citizen-soldiers conducted search and rescue operations and evacuated victims by helicopter, truck and bridge boat. Some soldiers braved the flood waters and drove into partially submerged roads to rescue stranded citizens.

The California Guard also established temporary shelters in armories.

Once again, California's CH-47 "Chinooks" were used extensively throughout the state for flood relief and rescue.

Sgt. Kelly Hughes, a 140th Aviation Brigade

"Chinook" crew chief, said his unit was glad to help because it is part of the community.

"The people we help are our friends and neighbors," he said.

(Compiled by Maj. Kevin G. Sandri, OC Deirdre M. Allingham and TSgt. Kevin Herglotz)



Photo by TSgt. Kevin Herglotz

SURVEYING - Lt. Gen. Edward Baca views flood-stricken areas on a map.



Photo by Spc. Michael J. Abelman, U.S. Army

CAVEMAN

Indiana Army Guardmember Sgt. David Strobel, a member of the 433rd Personnel Services Detachment and an avid spelunker, enjoys the view from Buckner's Cave. (See story and photos on Page 16.)

DRUG USE IS LIFE ABUSE



COMMENTARY

COUNTERDRUG UPDATE

• As of April 1, 2,701 Army National Guard and 875 Air National Guard personnel were on counterdrug support duty in all 54 states and territories.

• As of April 1, the total value of cash and drugs seized this fiscal year by police with National Guard assistance is \$6.967 billion.

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LETTERS

RANKING smaller RANK

*I'm writing this letter in response to a letter that appeared in the January *The On Guard*. The letter, written by MSgt. Judith Ackerman, was entitled, "Bigger Rank" and dealt with the size of the insignia on the uniforms of women.*

I understand MSgt. Ackerman's feeling that women are not treated equally in the Army. I, too, feel there is a double standard. For example, the requirements for successful completion of the Army's Physical Fitness Test are considerably less for female personnel.

MSgt. Ackerman pointed out that women "do not put on the uniform to appear feminine or appealing, they put it on to serve their country." Currently, women are allowed two Class A uniform configurations and six Class B. Men are allowed one Class A and three Class B configurations. If the size of the insignia is to be the same, then the options for wear of the uniform should be as well.

MSgt. Ackerman asserts that it would not cost anything to change the size of the insignia. On the contrary, if the military were to implement her suggestion, all of the smaller insignias would have to be changed to maintain uniformity. Also, this would mean throwing away all of the smaller insignia (wasting taxpayers money) and increasing production of the larger insignia (costing the taxpayer more money).

With the dire financial condition that the Guard is currently facing, I feel there are more important issues to be concerned

with, such as proper equipment, adequate training and personnel cutbacks. The size of woman's insignia should be the last of our worries.

If any officer or NCO feels he or she is not receiving the respect owed their rank, they should remember that respect is not obtained by the size of their insignia, but through their ability to lead.

If MSgt. Ackerman feels that there is a sexist view in the Army, then why not suggest that everything from the APFT requirements to Class B uniform, be standardized within the Army Guard.

I want to make it clear that I'm not arguing against MSgt. Ackerman's point. I'm simply stating that one must look at the whole issue.

SFC Gregory Conrad
Michigan National Guard

UNWELCOME WAGON

I was the Command Sergeant Major for Task Force Timberwolf from Oct 1, 1994 to Feb. 28, 1995. While conducting rail load operations at Ft. McCoy, Wis., I discovered some CSMs have a different outlook on what their careers should mean.

Several units of the 88th ARCOM and the Minnesota Army Guard provided troops to support our rail load from Nov. 28 to Dec. 17. When they arrived at McCoy it had snowed quite a bit, so they parked in a lot next to their barracks ... next to the Post Headquarters building. To make a long story short, a note was left on the windshields of their cars from the McCoy CSM. It read:

"Timberwolves: Fort McCoy is happy to have each of you at our installation. We will try to do everything possible to make your stay a pleasant one. We also want

you to understand a few basic rules.

1. You do not park in the Executive Officer's parking space.

2. You do not park in one of the spots reserved for visitors.

3. You do not park in one of the PAO parking spaces.

4. You do not park in the CSM's space, it took him 25 years to get it.

Two Choices: Park in the parking lot across the street or to the south end of this parking lot.

If you do not accept those two options, the third will be a ticket and a free ride on a tow truck.

Signed: CSM Rucynski.

I'm extremely proud of my service, as I'm sure CSM Rucynski is, but to degrade it by saying it took 25 years to get a parking spot ... give me a break.

Are we so power hungry that we go gunning for soldiers who volunteer to be away from their families and work in extreme conditions? The other lots were not plowed and a block from their barracks. Where should they have unloaded their cars?

I did not have an opportunity to visit with this fine NCO. It's probably good I didn't. We got our work done, departed Ft. McCoy, and deployed to Guatemala.

I hope CSM Rucynski has kept up with this fine tradition. Maybe more troops will leave Ft. McCoy, not to mention the service.

SGM (ret.) Claude H. Sand
Minnesota National Guard

FAX your Letters to the Editor to DSN 761-0732/0731 or (703) 681-0732. You may also mail your letters to: NGB-PAC, 2500 Army Pentagon, Washington, DC, 20310-2500

GUARD TOONS

By Lyle Farquhar



"I see you're celebrating another successful weigh-in."



IN THE NEWS

- Hawaii Flyers
- Gulf Hotline
- AAFES Catalog

Texas lands environmental award

Proactive programs acknowledged by Department of Army

The Texas Army National Guard has been awarded the 1994 Department of the Army Installation Pollution Prevention Award.

The award recognized Texas for cutting in half the generation of hazardous waste created in their state.

"Proactive individuals like Col. Cliff Barkley (Texas Army Guard's Director of Maintenance) and Col. Terry Shultz (Director of Aviation) saw an opportunity to cut costs by reducing waste," said Lt. Col. Edmond Komandosky, Texas Guard spokesman. "They forged ahead with new programs that were successful and reproduced them throughout the state."

Part of Texas' success can be attributed to the creation of the Pollution Prevention Committee. It was formed to review new technologies for waste minimization, screen potential environmental pollution products, recommend less toxic hazardous material products for use and encourage the turn-in of excess hazardous materials.

The PPC recommended the implementation of several new programs. They were:

- A diesel fuel recycling program that has reprocessed 119,000 gallons of fuel in 1994, saving the Guard \$83,300 in purchases for new fuel and \$332,000 to dispose of the fuel waste. The filtration system has virtually eliminated diesel fuel waste at Texas Guard facilities.

- Solvent filtration and distillation systems have allowed the Guard to reprocess and recycle more than 3,800 gallons of solvent in the last two years. This has saved more than \$62,000 in purchase and disposal costs.

- A used oil/fuel filter recycling program that has completely eliminated the waste from these filters and



Photo courtesy Texas National Guard

RECYCLING - Texas Guard's Sgt. James Moffett recycles oil and fuel filters at Camp Mabry as part of their pollution prevention program.

reduced the cost of filter disposal by 75 percent.

- A shop towel recycling program has eliminated the disposal of oil-contaminated towels in landfills.

- An antifreeze recycling system has recycled almost 1,700 gallons of antifreeze in 1994, saving the Guard almost \$9,000.

- Programs for recycling freon, extending battery life and the distribution of spill kits to maintenance shops.

"While these programs have saved the taxpayers a considerable amount of money, they have also greatly reduced the amount of waste that is put into the environment," Komandosky noted.

The Department of the Army will present the award to Texas National Guard officials at a ceremony in Washington, D.C., on April 18.



Photo by SSgt. Delmar Galicinas

SAFE AGAIN - A Hawaii Guard airman is welcomed home by an appreciative daughter.

Hawaii flyers return from successful Iraqi mission

By 1st Lt. Charles Anthony
Hawaii National Guard

It was a hero's welcome for 122 members of Hawaii's 154th Fighter Group recently when they returned home after patrolling the northern "no-fly zone" in Iraq.

The 154th, part of the 199th Fighter Squadron, and their F-15s deployed to Incirlik AB, Turkey, Dec. 3 to support Operation Provide Comfort II.

Maj. Gen. Edward Richardson, Hawaii's adjutant general, Maj. Gen. J.M. McBroom, Pacific Air Forces' deputy commander, and several hundred friends and family greeted the Hawaii airmen.

State Family Program Coordinator 2nd Lt. Laura Jones arranged for the reception. The music was

provided by Hawaii's 111th Army Band.

"When I went to Vietnam, only my immediate family saw me off at the airport," said Richardson. "And when I came back, they were the only ones to welcome me home. I didn't want that to happen again to our guys."

The 154th flew more than 60 sorties over Iraqi territory, chalking up more than 240 hours in the air. They protected ethnic Kurds in northern Iraq by keeping Iraqi air forces out of the "no-fly zone." The zone was imposed by the United Nations at the end of the Gulf War.

"It was pretty routine, except for a few seconds of excitement," said Lt. Col. Ed Pickering, 199th Fighter Squadron pilot, referring to one instance when Iraqi warplanes were detected just south of the zone.

NATIONAL BRIEFS

NEW TAGS ANNOUNCED

Three states have new Adjutants General.

In New Hampshire, Col. John E. Blair, former chief of staff of the New Hampshire Army National Guard, has been appointed as the Adjutant General. Blair succeeds Maj. Gen. Lloyd M. Price who retired on November 1, 1994.

The Governor of Illinois appointed Col. Richard G. Austin as Illinois Adjutant General. Austin is a former U.S. Marine and Vietnam veteran. He headed the General Services Administration under President George Bush.

Brig. Gen. Edmond W. Boenisch Jr. took the reins of the Wyoming National Guard during a change of command ceremony in January. Boenisch served as the assistant adjutant general since 1990 and is the first Air Guard officer to be permanently appointed as Adjutant General for Wyoming.

FREE CATALOG OFFERED

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service will mail free sales flyers to National Guard members and retirees living in the U.S. at their request. The flyers announce major exchange sales events. Guard customers who would like to be on the mailing list should call Rhonda Osborne at DSN 967-2960 or (214) 312-2960 or FAX (214) 312-3919; or write AAFES, ATTN: MK-V/S (Rhonda Osborne), P.O. Box 660202, Dallas, TX 75266-0202.

GULF HOTLINE ESTABLISHED

A new VA Persian Gulf Information Center has been established in St. Louis along with a national toll-free telephone help line. By dialing 1(800) PGW-VETS, Gulf veterans and their families will have free, direct access to current information about the issues that concern them.

COMPENSATION RULES SET

The VA has published a final rule on compensation payments to chronically disabled Persian Gulf veterans with undiagnosed illnesses.

Gulf veterans may be eligible for compensation if they have chronic (existing for six months) disabilities resulting from undiagnosed illnesses that became noticeable either during service in Southwest Asia during the Persian Gulf War or within two years thereafter. A list of 13 categories of undiagnosed illnesses has been included in the rule as a means of identifying the kinds of conditions for which compensation may be paid.

Gulf veterans or their families can contact the nearest VA office by calling 1(800) 827-1000.



Photo by SSgt. Paula Levesque
The 102nd Fighter Wing's new brush fire fighter.

Massachusetts showcases new 'brush breaker'

By Frank J. Adinolfi Jr.
Massachusetts National Guard

Eighteen tons of steel. Over nine feet high. Able to smash through burning brush and knock scrub pines flat. This is a truck Arnold Schwarzenegger would love.

"The best, biggest and newest brush breaker on the Cape," said Robert Schultz, chief of the Otis Air National Guard Base Fire Department about the vehicle officially placed in service Jan. 30. "It's going to be a powerful addition."

"We're specialized in the type of forest that we have in southeastern Massachusetts," added Schultz. "It's the second most potentially dangerous brushfire area outside of the West Coast."

The brush breaker was built from the chassis up by workers at the 102nd Fighter Wing to fight brush fires. The design and construction includes half-inch-thick armored plating front and back and six-inch-in-diameter steel piping for guard rails, racks and fuel tank protection. Civilian workers Russell Timms and James Sherman designed the truck's structure and supervised its construction.

"If we tried to buy one of these custom-built vehicles on the commercial market, it would cost \$150,000. To build one ourselves cost us \$25,000," said SMSgt. Jay Kill, the vehicle maintenance superintendent in charge of building the brush breaker. "This way saves the taxpayers a lot of money."

A second brush breaker is scheduled for construction this Spring.

Schwarzenegger was invited to the commissioning ceremony, but was unable to attend. He did, however, send his "best wishes" for the project through his Los Angeles production office.

Webster picked top recruiter

'A role model for my entire recruiting force'

By Capt. M. Monroe Gollaher
Idaho National Guard

Idaho recruiter SFC Michael Webster has been named the nation's top Army Guard recruiter for 1994.

The 49-year-old St. Anthony, Idaho father of seven, recruits for the Pocatello-based 1st Battalion, 748th Field Artillery. He enlisted 38 Guardmembers last year from a "beat" that extends from Salmon to Rigby, Ririe and on up north to Driggs.

But the prestigious award is based on more than simple recruiting numbers, according to Lt. Col. James Van Dam, Idaho's recruiting and retention manager.

"This award is modeled more after the concept of the ideal 'citizen-soldier,' and not just the number of people you can talk into joining the Guard," says Van Dam. "Any number of successful recruiters may be great salesmen, but that doesn't mean they make good neighbors."

"In addition to a recruiter's raw enlistment numbers, the award criteria also considers the quality of individuals enlisted. Factors like an enlistee's education level, successful completion of military training, and continued commitment to the Guard are just as important."

"A recruit who cannot complete his initial military training is a waste of the

taxpayer's money," Van Dam explained, "and a person who drops out of the Guard after a year or two isn't much better."

The recruiter's community involvement, military and civilian education, achievement awards, physical fitness and marksmanship scores are also considered.

Those who personally know the modest C. Michael Webster would agree the 31-year Guard veteran (nine as a full-time recruiter) fits the ideal of the citizen-soldier like a glove.

With a well-deserved reputation of being embedded in community and church activities, Webster is also known as a man who demonstrates his commitment and integrity by practicing what he preaches.

"Every one of my own sons, when they were old enough, joined the Guard because we believe it is an organization that helps build good citizens and strong communities," Webster says. "Look, I'm not going to put someone else's son into a program I don't believe in personally, or wouldn't put my own sons in."

Nor would he put a bad egg in the



SFC C. Michael Webster

organization he believes in as well.

"SFC Webster has the lowest rejection rating of recruits he enlists I've seen," says Van Dam, who praises the consistent quality of Webster's recruiting efforts. "One year he had an almost 100 percent quality rating; almost unheard of in recruiting circles."

Associates and military superiors alike acknowledge that Webster is, in the words of Van Dam, a "real self-starting, self-maintenance kind of guy," whose dedication and sincerity lead him to "consistently perform above mission."

"I truly think of SFC Michael Webster as a humble role model for my entire recruiting force," says Van Dam. "This isn't a guy who was born with a silver spoon in his mouth, or oodles of natural ability and talent. Not many people realize this about him, but I know of his personal struggles, his ups and downs, and how it has taken a real gut-busting effort for him to achieve the success he so richly deserves."

So what does Webster have to say about it all? Mostly he likes to talk about the "line ranch" of 240 acres he has been building near St. Anthony for his wife Sally and family, where he already runs more than 50 head of cattle. A long-time horse lover, he says that one of his dreams is to raise horses and cattle in retirement.

If SFC C. Michael Webster raises horses and cattle as well as he does recruits for the Idaho Guard, he'll be a livestock baron by 60.



Photo by Cathy Haller

PASS the BREAD, PLEASE

A recent Pennsylvania Farm Show featured an 800-pound sculpture depicting three soldiers during the Battle of the Bulge. The sculpture, called "Giving Thanks," was designed and crafted by James Victor. Pennsylvania's World War II Commemoration Committee worked with their state's dairy alliance to bring the sculpture to life. The Keystone State's Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Gerald Sajer, and the Pennsylvania National Guard's 553rd Air Force Band were on hand for the presentation. After the show, the butter was donated to local charities.



PEOPLE

D.C.'s Col.
(Dr.) Sonja
M. Johns
continues to
set firsts

BREAKING BARRIERS

By Maj. Mike Milord
D.C. National Guard

Sitting in a doctor's office in the 12th grade gave Sonja Johns a cold, impersonal feeling. It also gave her enough time to seriously think about her future.

The one-time teenage patient and native Washingtonian recently set a host of firsts when she was promoted to colonel in the District of Columbia Air National Guard's 113th Medical Squadron.

Upon her promotion, Col. (Dr.) Sonja M. Johns, the medical squadron's first black female commander and flight surgeon, also became the medical squadron's, and the D.C. Air Guard's, first female to earn the highest field grade rank.

Life as a military leader was not her primary goal when she joined the D.C. Air National Guard in 1983.

As chief resident, she had just completed her residency in family practice at Howard University Hospital in Washington, D.C., and was getting ready to

enter private practice.

But she also wanted to do something different.

"My sister and I were going to join (the military) together," said Johns. "My mother discouraged her and encouraged me, so I joined and she didn't."

Commissioned in the D.C. Air Guard as a captain, she came in at a time when there were few women doctors.

"I was the first female doctor in the 113th (Clinic)," she said.

While the 113th had a predominantly male population then, any existing stereotypes about women or personal preferences for a male doctor never surfaced.

"Any stereotype may have let go," said Johns. "I was readily accepted by and examined the senior leaders. I was quite humorous and we laughed through the examination."

At the same time she was growing in her military medical career, the self-described "country doctor" expanded her health service practice to become the founder and owner of Westmoreland Health Services



Photo by Maj. Mike Milord

Inc., in Tappahannock, Va.

"I came down here from Washington when a former classmate mentioned that the area needed a doctor," said Johns. "I went down and wound up staying."

And she has stayed, long enough to raise a family of four, nearly-grown teenagers, and to establish her credibility as Rich-

mond County, Va.'s only practicing physician.

Johns' "firsts" were not only "very important steps" for her, but also the D.C. Air Guard.

"It's a real achievement for me, but for the new people coming in, especially minorities and women. It says that if you are the best qualified, you can reach your full potential," said Johns.

CHECK UP - District of Columbia Air Guard's Col. (Dr.) Sonja Johns undergoes flight medicine training.

One by one, the barriers have come down.

"I feel like a test pilot, being watched from above and below," said Johns. "You don't want to fail your superiors or your subordinates. I want to constantly prove they (her superiors) made the right decision."

If her credentials and other firsts are any indication, they made the best choice.

Born in our nation's capitol, Johns graduated as salutatorian in her 1971 Western Senior High School (now Duke Ellington School of the Performing Arts) class.

She went on to graduate summa cum laude from Howard University with a bachelors degree in zoology. In 1978, she received her doctorate in medicine degree from Howard University College of Medicine.

She received her flight surgeon wings in April 1989.

A selectee for several Virginia gubernatorial appointments, Col. Johns has served previously on the Council on the Status of Women, the Board of Veterans Affairs and the Advisory Board to the Center on Rural Development.

She lives in Tappahannock with her four children, fraternal twins Ashante and George, 17, Chiquita, 15 and Maria, 13.

Speaking the same language

By SSgt. Tom Springer
Michigan National Guard

Like most college students, Cadet Stuart Williams often takes courses that seem unrelated to the "real world."

Until recently, his "Appreciation of Spanish Literature" course at Washington State University fell into this category. But a two-week National Guard annual training in Panama taught him otherwise.

"My knowledge of subjects like Spanish literature and Latin American current events was real helpful," Williams said. "It's helped me make small talk and build trust with Cuban migrants."

Williams, a Spanish and philosophy major, is a ROTC cadet at Washington State in Pullman. He's also a linguist with the Washington Army National Guard's Com-

pany A, 341st Military Intelligence Battalion.

Recently, he deployed to Panama as an interpreter.

"It's my job to debrief the non-military people who work with the Cubans," said Williams. "Debriefing visitors gives the Army a better understanding of what's going on."

In support of Operation Safe Haven, he's worked with a range of civilian officials including clergy, international aid organizations and the Department of Justice.

Operation Safe Haven is designed to provide temporary support to Cubans transported from Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to Panama. Community camps are capable of providing a reasonable quality of life for 7,600 people.

Most of Williams' contacts with the Cuban migrants have been informal, often in conversations over lunch or dinner inside the camps.

"It helps me find out what their sentiments are,"



Photo by SSgt. Tom Roberts

CHATting - Cadet Stuart Williams talks to a Cuban.

Williams said. "But it also keeps my language skills sharp. They talk fast, sometimes with accents and use their own slang and colloquialisms."

After graduating from Washington State, he plans to attend law school in Texas.

"As a lawyer, I'd like to work with issues surrounding NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement)," he said. "So any extra exposure I can get to Latin American culture is a big plus."

When Williams returns to school, he'll bring back some new insights to compliment his textbook lessons.

"It's been a lot better than sitting in a classroom studying verb tenses," he said of his Panama experience. "Besides, back in Pullman it's 17 degrees outside."

MAINTAINING - Missouri's Spc. Scott Waynick performs maintenance on a vehicle used on roads.



By Spc. Thomas W. Mehl
Michigan National Guard

Under an unforgiving sun, amid sweltering 100-degree temperatures, a melting pot of active and reserve component U.S. troops and Panamanian people have come together in Panama to make operation "Fuerter Caminos — Americas" a reality.

Led by engineer units of the Missouri Army National Guard, "Fuerter Caminos," a Spanish phrase meaning "strong roads," is intended to make the rural hill country 40 miles west of Panama City a better place to live.

"We are building bridges, not destroying them," said Lt. Col. Richard Kotch of the St. Louis-based 10th Psychological Operations Battalion, U.S. Army Reserve.

Kotch is one of the key players in Fuerter Caminos. He was busy the first day of the operation interpreting for officials of the Nueva Arenosa School and the U.S. military task force. Panamanian school children gathered in the schoolyard with their families to hear the good news from Kotch that the school would receive much-needed repairs, including a new roof.

Following the impromptu meeting, U.S. soldiers handed out candy to the children, while the Panamanians returned the goodwill with bags of fresh oranges and grapefruit for the soldiers. Kotch said such goodwill is imperative in an operation such as Fuerter Caminos.

"It is just as important for Panamanians to know us as it is for us to know them," said Kotch.

While Kotch was establishing contact with the Panamanian villagers, U.S. Army Reserve Maj. Robert O'Grady of Cape Girardeau, Mo., was busy organizing the supply base at Albrook Air Force Station 40 miles away. O'Grady's problem was the over enthusiasm of his troops.

"The hardest part of command and

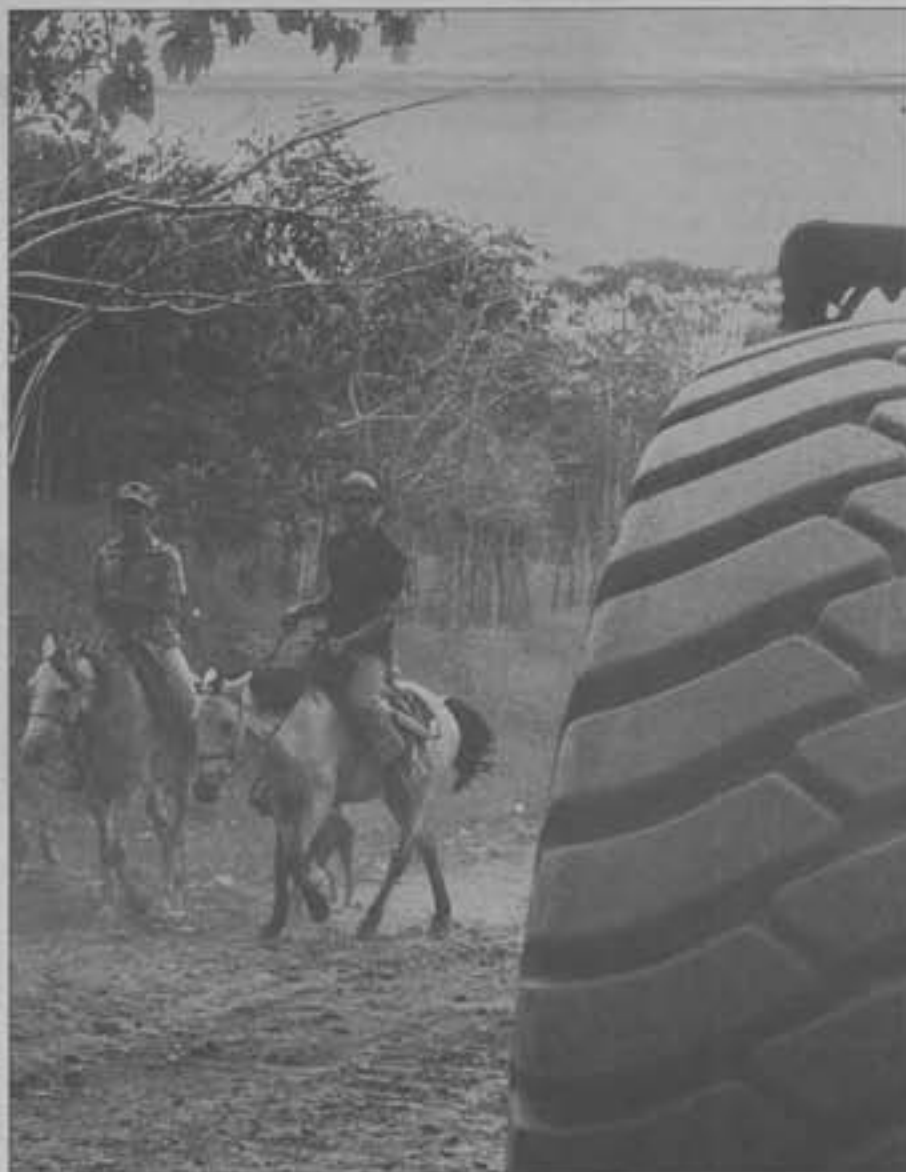
FUERTE CAMINOS

The National Guard is building more than just 'strong roads' in Panama



Photos by SSgt. Wayne Rowe

BUILDING ROADS - A Missouri Army Guardmember (above) pulls rock and dirt from a makeshift stone quarry in Panama. Two rural Panamanians (left) gaze at the 'wheels of progress' as it rolls down the road.



control is getting people to do things in the right order," said O'Grady, commander of headquarters company of the operation called "Task Force Mule."

"Everybody really wants to work. We just have to maintain control and keep the troops working at a steady pace."

From January to June, about 4,150 servicemembers will deploy to Panama during 10 rotations to take part in the operation. In addition to the Missouri Army Guard, other major components include the U.S. Army Reserve's 102nd Army Reserve Command, and National Guard units from Alabama, Florida, Kansas and Utah.

O'Grady said deploying troops to Panama will upgrade more than eight miles of roadways, repair 14 schools and three medical clinics, and drill or repair 14 water wells while performing the joint humanitarian and civic-assistance exercise.

Miles away from O'Grady near Caimito, Panama, members of the U.S. Air Force's 823rd Civil Engineering Squadron converted a farmer's field into a base camp. When completed, the camp will be home for 600 troops and feature a self-purifying water supply and a state-of-the-art communications system.

On a hill overlooking the camp, SSgt.

ROAD IMPROVEMENT - Missouri Guardmembers with the 203rd Engineer Battalion (bottom photo) repair a culvert crossing in Panama. Florida Guard's SSgt. Michael Singletary (below, right) inspects communications equipment with Spc. Jesse Price.



Photo by Spc. Thomas W. Mehl



Michael Singletary of the Florida Army Guard's 653rd Signal Company inspected the satellite communication system that will allow the base camp to send microwave telephone messages worldwide.

"This is only the second time this type of link-up has been done, so you could say this operation is making history," Singletary said.

When asked about the help his community was about to receive from the U.S. servicemen, Justino Rodriguez of Nueva Arenosa School did not hesitate to reply.

"We are very appreciative of the aid we are receiving from the U.S. Forces," Rodriguez said. "Gracias."

Mississippi's drug academy teaches civilian law officials to catch the bad guys

PRESSING the FIGHT

By Lt. Col. Parker Hills
Mississippi National Guard

As a rivulet of sweat inched from beneath the cop's black plastic hatband and writhed down his crinkled forehead, he kept repeating in his mind, "speed and aggression."

In a split second, a ram splintered a door jam and shattered a lock. The team was in. The bad guys were apprehended. The drug raid was over. Kilos of cocaine, numerous hand guns and assault rifles and more than \$500,000 were confiscated.

But that was just a beginning.

Successful drug raids are like well-planned military assaults, where diversion, firepower and speed are used. Unfortunately, many of the police who wage the drug war every day do so with little training, because of limited funding. In short, today's cop can get killed before he or she has learned the job.

Enter the Mississippi National Guard.

In 1992, this problem led to the emergence of a unique training facility, the Regional Counterdrug Training Academy located at the Naval Air Station in Meridian, Miss. As part of the Gulf State's Counterdrug Initiative, the Academy has the mission of training civilian law enforcement officers in enforcement-level counterdrug skills.

What makes the Academy unique is this "tactical" training is conducted by the Mississippi National Guard. Since the first class in September, 1992, 1,662 law enforcement officers in 54 classes have graduated from the 16-subject class.

"The R.C.T.A. is already nationally known. When people leave here, they are better-trained, more confident to do their job, and better able to do it," said Brian Sheridan, deputy assistant Secretary of Defense for drug enforcement policy and support.

National Guard Bureau Chief, Lt. Gen. Edward Baca, sees the importance of the Academy. "The drug threat is the primary challenge facing our nation," he said.

The RCTA provides room, board and tuition at no cost to the law-enforcement agencies. The only cost to the lawman's agency is his or her time. As a Department of Defense-funded agency, the RCTA can provide military housing, meals and facilities at a fraction of what similar training programs would cost elsewhere.

The RCTA curriculum is developed by its Director of Training, an experienced narcotics officer. Advising him in course development and student recruiting is a board of representatives, comprised of senior law enforcement officials, as well as officers from the Academy and the National Guard Bureau.

The training covers everything from basic drug identification to sophisticated counterdrug techniques. Students are even given a class on the use of advanced audio and video equipment.

To provide a realistic field environment, National Guard engineers constructed a "combat town," designed for surveillance, raid planning, dog training, rappelling and an endless variety of training scenarios. Paint guns are used by students and "bad guys," and exercises are video-taped. The Academy's remote location also provides plenty of wooded area for practicing rural surveillance.

Once the drug raid is over, the work continues. The area is searched for booby traps and the crime scene investigated. The RCTA's financial manipulations course also teaches students how to "follow the money." In short, once the dealer and drugs are caught, they locate the "respected businessmen" who provided financial backing for the drug operation.

The Academy's motto is *Persevere in Pugna* (Latin for "Press the Fight"). It helps remind students to maintain an offensive posture in the war on drugs.

"As far as I'm concerned," observed a recent graduate, "the training at the RCTA is the best thing that has ever happened to our agency."

TRAINING - Cops and Mississippi Guardmembers conduct drug training.



Photo by SFC William R. Jones

SAFETY and FITNESS

PT: You're on your own

Fitness trainers can help improve performances

By Maj. Eric Durr
New York National Guard

Being fit is a Total Force task, but the National Guard demands more individual discipline from its members when it comes to physical readiness, says SFC Charles Heffner, master fitness trainer for the New York Guard's Headquarters Company, 42nd Infantry Division.

In the active Army, for example, soldiers do platoon, company, or battalion physical-fitness training at least three times a week. It's mandatory, monitored and part of the work day, Heffner said.

For Guardmembers, however, physical fitness is a personal responsibility.

"The fitness of the unit depends on what soldiers do on their own time," Heffner said. "You've got to stress to the individual that he or she has to donate personal time to get to the point where they can pass their physical training test."

As a fitness trainer, Heffner's job is helping soldiers get into shape. He conducts regular physical training tests, runs his unit's remedial PT program for those who fail and preaches the benefits of a low-fat diet to anybody willing to listen.

Two weeks of master fitness school in 1985 opened Heffner's eyes to the science of keeping fit. He'd always been athletic. But now, after attending the school, he understands what real fitness requires.

You don't need to train like a professional athlete to enjoy the benefits of physical fitness, he learned. Three hours of exercise a week, says Heffner, is enough to feel better, look better and pass the PT test.

The Army National Guard's fitness coordinator agrees, with a caveat. Maj. Christine Stark stresses that individual exercise programs need to be year-round, not just in the weeks preceding physical training tests.

"We focus on the PT test because it's an annual requirement," said Stark, also a master fitness trainer. "But it should not be the be-all, end-all of a physical-training program. In fact, cramming for a PT test can often do more harm than good."

"Get in shape gradually, stay in shape year-round," she added, "and you should have no worries about the PT test."

The two fitness experts recommend moderately intense aerobic exercise for at least half an hour, three days a week.

Any activity that moderately increases your pulse is good, they say. These include: jogging, swimming, bicycling, aerobics, roller blading, cross-country skiing, racquetball and brisk walking.



Photo by Spc. Christopher Moriarty

PUMPED UP - The key to physical fitness is finding three hours a week for exercise says New York Army Guard master fitness trainer SFC Charles Heffner.

Another hour and a half per week—again split into three sessions—should be devoted to muscular exercise. Fancy machinery isn't needed, says Heffner. Pushups and sit-ups don't require any equipment, exercise dips can be done using household furniture and a chin-up bar installed in a doorway is more than adequate, he said.

Both experts added that the key to a successful exercise program is finding an activity you like that fits into your lifestyle.

Overall, Heffner said, National Guardmembers need to be active.

"At a minimum everyone should try to get into some kind of exercise program, whether it's walking, bike riding, whatever," he said. "Make it fun. Take the family out on a bike ride, anything to just get active. Just don't go home after work, eat supper and watch TV all night."

Diet is also important, adds Heffner. Fat should be no more than 30 percent of your daily caloric intake, he said.

Keeping Guard soldiers fit can be frustrating, Heffner says, since he sees most unit members only once a month.

"Sometimes I'm impatient," he said. "But I realize that not everybody is as 'gung-ho' as I am."

Rewards are there, though, he says. "When I work with someone who passes the PT test after habitually failing it," Heffner said, "I feel great."

If you have further physical fitness questions, contact your unit or state headquarters for the names of master fitness trainers in your organization.

(Capt. John Goheen contributed to this article.)

A

Texas' 2nd Lt. Toni Oppliger did the Guard proud

GLADIATOR

By Capt. John Goheen
National Guard Bureau

The Army Guard has nearly 400,000 soldiers, but only one gladiator.

2nd Lt. Toni Oppliger of the Texas National Guard's 249th Signal Battalion earned the distinction by appearing on the Feb. 18 episode of *American Gladiators*.

The popular television program features competitors in tests of physical prowess against the show's stars, a collection of former college and pro athletes with comic-book nicknames and muscle-magazine physiques.

"Just being selected to compete was a great honor," said Oppliger, 33, of Frisco, Texas. "They only picked 30 women from the thousands who tried out across the country. Sports and physical fitness are a big part of my life. Being a part of *American Gladiators* reaffirmed to me who I am, what I am."

"And competing was a lot of fun. They paid me, but I would have done it for free."

Oppliger's opponent was Sandra Smith, a nationally ranked kick boxer and correctional officer from Arizona.

Their match came down to the last few feet of the final event. With the studio audience in a frenzy, Smith held off the Guardmember's late charge in a hi-tech obstacle course called "The Eliminator" for a two-second victory.

"It was 'photo finish,' and one of the best matches of the season," said Adam Jordan, coordinating producer, *American Gladiators*. "Both were tough competitors. We purposely put them together because we knew it would be a good contest."

"Toni is one kick-ass lady," Jordan added. "We loved the fact that she's in the military and we played up that fact in the show. Some of our highest-rated shows have involved members of the armed forces."

Added Oppliger: "I've never had so much glory in losing. (Since the show aired) I've had kids ask for my autograph. Perfect strangers have walked

up and talked to me. I met a couple in their mid-50s at a rummage sale who said they recognized me. People you least expect are really big fans of the show."

The telecast also came as a relief to Oppliger. She agreed not to reveal her match's outcome until after its broadcast date. For eight months, Oppliger resisted temptation and some friendly coercion.

"Everybody wanted to know if I'd won; my family, my friends, my unit, guys at my gym, reporters," she said. "Some tried to bribe me. I wanted to tell them, but I couldn't."

Even Oppliger's battalion commander was spurned.

"I had to watch the show just like everyone else," said Maj. Kenneth Browning. "She was up against a tough opponent and performed very well. She brought the same outgoing personality, determination and take charge attitude to the *American Gladiators* that she exhibits in our unit."

Oppliger, executive officer of the 249th's Dallas-based headquarters company, said the show's events are tougher—and the gladiators even bigger—than they appear on the tube.

"You really don't appreciate how big the gladiators are until you're next to one," Oppliger said. "'Jazz' (a female gladiator) is 'six-three' and has forearms larger than most of the guys at my gym. Next to her, I looked like a dwarf."

A very physically fit dwarf, however. At 5 feet, 3 inches tall, 118 pounds, she was one of the show's smallest competitors this season. But, with daily workouts of up to three hours, Oppliger may have also been one of the best conditioned.

The Texas Guardmember traces her avid interest in exercise and athletics to her early teenage years in Norfolk, Neb.

"I was latch-key kid," she says. "When I came home from school, nobody was there. I had nothing else to do, so I started playing football with some of the neighborhood boys. They let me play until I became better than them. That's when I knew I'd found my niche."

Oppliger went on to star in basketball and tennis in high school, eventually earning an





Photo courtesy of American Gladiators

GLADIATOR - 2nd Lt. Toni Opplinger beat out thousands of competitors to appear on the TV show *American Gladiators*.

door if you couldn't do 23 pull-ups in 30 seconds. I saw a lot of fit people looking discouraged. It was 'cake' for me because of all the pull-ups I did in the Marines."

Rope climbing, the 40-yard dash and *American Gladiators'* football/basketball mix, "Powerball," were also included in the audition, according to Opplinger.

"At the end, a few of us were interviewed on camera by Mike Adamle (former NFL running back and the show's host)," she said. "They said they would call if they were interested."

After about 10 days of waiting for the phone to ring, Opplinger became discouraged. Then, she got The Call.

"I was at my gym when the phone rang," said Opplinger. "At first, I thought it was a crank call. Then the caller identified himself as Adam Jordan from *American Gladiators*. All I could say was yes, yes, yes."

The Guardmember spent eight days in Hollywood last June with the show's cast and crew.

"They flew me out there, put me on the 'Gladiator' payroll," and paid for all my expenses," she said. "I was treated like a queen."

"But we worked hard," Opplinger added. "They do more than one show at a time so it took all day to complete my match. We started in the morning and didn't run 'The Eliminator' until about 9 o'clock that night. The practice sessions were also tough. A couple people broke bones."

Ironically, a week after returning from *American Gladiators* unscathed, Opplinger shattered her left wrist in a pick-up basketball game.

The wrist was broken in several places. And despite two operations and months of therapy, she still has nerve and ligament damage, which threatens her Guard career. Opplinger is now preparing for more surgery and added rehabilitation.

"My unit has been great through this entire ordeal," she said. "They care about me as a person, not just as a soldier."

"After I left the Marines," Opplinger added, "I missed that feeling, that camaraderie. That's why I joined the Guard. I'm not going to let a basketball injury put me out of the military. It's going to be a struggle, but I'm one tough cookie."

She'll get no arguments from anyone associated with *American Gladiators*.

(Editor's Note: Opplinger's match will be rebroadcast the weekend of June 3-4.)

athletic scholarship to the University of Wisconsin at Whitewater. After graduating with a degree in health and physical education, she spent two years in the Marine Corps (1987-89), where she played on the All-Marine basketball and interservice tennis teams.

Today, exercise and athletics are both Opplinger's vocation and avocation. She owns and operates "Toni's Gym," a 3,000-square-foot fitness center in the Dallas suburb of Garland.

"It was the guys at the gym who told me that *American Gladiators* was holding a 'challenger' tryout in Dallas," said Opplinger.

"The tryout was on April 27, 1994. I'll never forget that day," she said. "About 1,500 people showed up, but they wouldn't let you in the

SAFETY

Dividends

Army Guard aviators record accident all-time low

By Capt. John Goheen
National Guard Bureau

Army aviators are among the safest helicopter pilots in the world, safer even than their active-duty and civilian counterparts.

That's the assertion of Lt. Col. Richard Sherman, chief of the Army National Guard's aviation safety branch. And he has the numbers to prove his claim.

"For the past five years, our class A accident rate has been 0.36 per 100,000 hours flown," said Sherman. "Over the same period, the active Army rate has been 2.5 class A accidents and general aviation (civilian) pilots had about 10 for every 100,000 flying hours."

The Army Guard's more recent aviation safety trend is even more impressive.

"On March 13, we completed 24 months without a class A accident," he said. "That's more than 750,000 flying hours without a serious accident, which is remarkable when you consider the age of some of our aircraft."

Class A accidents are those resulting in a fatality, permanent disability, or damages greater than \$1 million.

Sherman attributes the Army Guard's success to streamlined communication.

"It's critical that aviation units quickly receive the latest safety and maintenance information," he said. "This is where we have a real advantage. We have a short chain of command. We talk directly with each State Army Aviation Officer, who

has day-to-day contact with the aviation units in his state. The active Army has several layers of structure. We also spend more time on training and education."

The Army Guard's aviation safety achievement could not have come at a better time, according to Sherman.

"Accidents come out of hide," he said. "When we lose an aircraft, we won't get a replacement. We're on a tight budget. We just can't afford to lose any aircraft or training dollars."

Army Guard aviation hasn't always been this safe. In the late '60s, the class A accident rate hovered around 10 per 100,000 hours of flying time. The serious accident rate fell steadily through the '70s and '80s. In 1990, Army Guard aviators recorded their first training year without a class A accident.

Sherman, an aviator with more than 2,500 flying hours, says that serious accidents began to decrease dramatically when the Guard started emphasizing safety. He adds that the experience of Guard aviators has also been a factor.

"An experienced pilot can often avert a serious accident," said Sherman. "There have also been many situations where a savvy pilot was the difference between a minor 'fender-bender' and an accident with loss of life and aircraft."

Sherman is proud of what Army Guard aviators have accomplished, but has some concerns about the future.

"Many of our most experienced pilots are nearing retirement," he said. "When they go, they'll take a lot of experience with them."

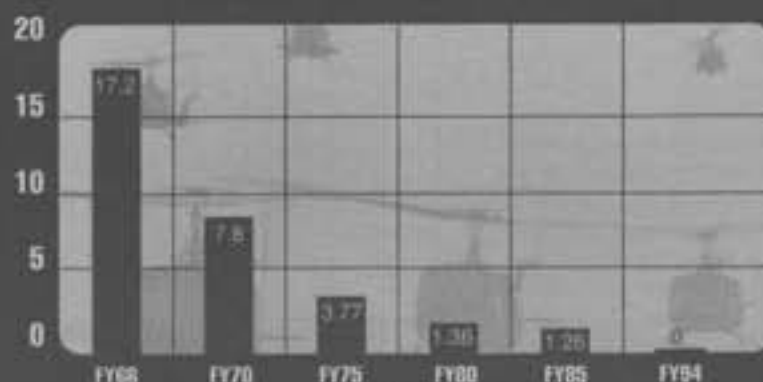
"In addition, flying hours have been cut, which means it'll take longer for our new pilots to become proficient."

Despite the reduction in big-ticket aircraft accidents, the Army Guard continues to lose several lives and millions of dollars annually to avoidable accidents.

In fiscal year 1994, accidents cost the Army Guard 17 soldiers—12 in crashes involving personal vehicles—and more than \$21 million.

"We could've hired 462 full-time technicians with what we spent on accidents last year," said Sherman. "Accidents are down, but they are still costing us dearly."

ARMY GUARD Aviation ACCIDENTS (per 100,000 flying hours)



(Figures indicate 'Class A' accidents only)

SOURCE: National Guard Bureau Aviation & Safety Directorate



SPORTS

- Lifting family
- Super kids
- Arizona runner

SPORTS SHORTS



Maj. Charles Allen (left) and daughter Alisha in action.

ALLENS LIFT IN COMPETITION

Maj. Charles Allen, a pilot with the Wisconsin Air Guard's 128th Air Refueling Group, and his daughter Alisha, 12, recently competed in the Wisconsin Open Weightlifting Championships. Alisha, competing in her first state open championship, broke two state records in her weight class and finished first overall. Allen, the defending state champion in his class, finished third. His lifts moved him up in U.S. and world rankings from 25th to 6th in the U.S. and from 49th to 32nd in the world.

ARIZONAN KEEPS ON RUNNING, BIKING

If CMSgt. Jim McDorman, Arizona's Senior Enlisted Advisor and 33-year veteran of the 162nd Fighter Group, kept track of the miles he runs and cycles each year, his annual mileage total would probably surpass the miles driven in a year by many people.

What started out as a jog around the block with a friend who had heart problems ended up a year later in marathons. In addition to running several marathons, McDorman has added a heavy dose of cycling to his regimen. He has run four marathons and the Grand Canyon Trek. He has also cycled more than 400 miles across Tennessee.

When he retires next year, he plans a ride from Seattle to Boston.

Biathletes compete in Minnesota

New York's Schreiner, Oregon's Nordyke top men's, women's finishers

By Capt. Kevin Gutknecht
Minnesota National Guard

The Minnesota National Guard biathlon team finished first for the second consecutive year at the National Guard Bureau Biathlon Championships held at Camp Ripley, Minn., Feb. 11 to 18.

Minnesota secured the win by taking firsts in two relay races, the 4-by-7.5 kilometer race and the military patrol race. Oregon took second and Vermont was third in team competition.

The top men's finisher after the seven-day competition was Curtis Schreiner of New York. He was followed by Oregon's Robert Rosser and Vermont's Dan Estover.

The top women's finisher was Oregon's Debbie Nordyke. Kara Salmela of Vermont was second and Utah's Dina Newhouse came in third. Top junior men's finisher was Jeremiah Silbernack of Minnesota, followed by Lance Turcotte of Minnesota and Colby Busching of Vermont.

The biathlon combines cross-country skiing and rifle target shooting. Competitors ski a looping cross-country



Photo by MSgt. Charles Farrow

WINNING EFFORT - Members of the winning Minnesota National Guard team (above) ski to the finish line. New York's Curt Schreiner (left) was the top men's finisher.



Photo by Sgt. Laurence Rogers
course, stopping periodically to shoot at targets from standing and prone positions. Scoring is based on time and target hits. Shooters missing targets ski penalty laps.

More than 170 skiers from 25 states

skied and shot at the Camp Ripley biathlon course, considered one of the best in the nation.

The NGB biathlon program began in 1971 when the U.S. Army ended its biathlon program. It began as a regional competition on the east coast and has grown to serve the entire country.

The program is a major source of athletes for the U.S. Biathlon Team. Last year, five Guardmembers—three women and two men—participated at the Olympics in Norway as part of the U.S. team.



Photo by Sgt. Lance Kanihapi

HAWAII'S SUPER KIDS

Hawaii Army Guard's Pvt. Edwin Calaro (left) clocks a sack racer at the 15th Annual Superkids competition on the island of Maui. The event raises money to educate children on the hazards of lung disease and drug abuse. "It's great to see the kids working hard and raising money," said SFC Terry Gusman of the 1st Battalion, 299th Infantry. "I just love being here to help them out."

Nebraska medic
helps disabled civilian
to safety during fire

By Sgt. Kevin Hynes
Nebraska National Guard

HIGH-RISE HERO

The motto of the 1-167th Cavalry Squadron is "Ti Rah, I Kuts," Latin meaning *bold ones*.

A medical specialist assigned to the Nebraska Army National Guard unit was that and much more when an electrical fire thrust him into the role of "High-rise Hero."

Spc. Mike L. Sinkule, 21, was working at his job as a cook in the Nebraska Club, a private restaurant located on the 20th floor of FirstTier Bank in Lincoln, on the evening of Dec. 7, when the lights in the building flickered and went out. Despite the sudden loss of electrical power, Sinkule said he and the other employees weren't "alarmed."

Earlier, around 4:45 that afternoon, the lights flickered off and the fire alarms had sounded. Everyone was forced to evacuate down to the street for about 15 minutes until the all-clear signal was given and we were allowed to reenter the building," said Sinkule, a pre-med student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln who has worked at the Nebraska Club for more than five years.

Upon returning to the club, Sinkule and his co-workers immediately set to work. It was to be a busy night, he said, because not only did the Nebraska Club crew have to complete their preparations for a party of 100 Bryan Memorial Hospital administrators scheduled to arrive shortly, they also had to begin cooking for an even larger party the next night.

"We had just begun to put out the hors d'oeuvres around 6:15 when the lights flickered and went out again," he said. "Only this time, there was no alarm."

"So we called down to the maintenance manager and asked if we should evacuate again. He told us that there was no need," Sinkule said.

According to published reports, the cause of the first power outage and alarm was a small

fire in the FirstTier electrical vault room. Building officials were attempting to determine the cause of the first fire when a huge electrical panel inside the vault room exploded and started a second, larger fire.

"After we had gotten done talking to the maintenance people, we started bringing decorative lamps into the club to give the people some light," said Sinkule. "Two or three minutes later, the alarms in the building started going off and we were told to evacuate," Sinkule said.

Despite the loss of electricity and the sounds of the fire alarms, Sinkule said the crowd, which numbered about 80 members of the party and approximately 15 employees, remained calm.

"At first, nobody seemed really concerned. Those of us who went through the first evacuation knew how cold it was outside, so we kind of took our time looking for our coats," he said. "A lot of the guests came up and ordered drinks and picked up hors d'oeuvres for the trip downstairs."

The reality of the situation quickly dawned on the crowd when the doors to the fire escape were pushed open and smoke

and darkness of the stairwell, complicated further when an emergency generator failed to turn on the overhead lights. Sinkule said club employees handed out dampened cloths and decorative candles to the patrons.

Just as Sinkule was about to leave the club, a distraught woman approached him and told him that there was a man in the room who was physically unable to make it down the 20 floors to safety. Sinkule quickly found his boss and told him of the situation. Together, they decided the best way to evacuate the man was to have him sit in one of their breakroom chairs while the employees carried him and the chair down the steps.

However, when he returned with the chair, Sinkule found that the man was no longer on the 20th floor. Apparently, he said, another employee had told the man that he was going to have to try and make it down the steps on his own. Fortunately, Sinkule added, he found the man in the stairwell, having just started down.

"I told him to keep going until he got to the first landing. Four of us then picked him up and carried him from the rest of the way down," he said.

Sinkule said the trip, which took approximately 10-15 minutes, "seemed like forever."

"The worst thing was the smoke. They had given wet cloths to the other people to put over their mouths as they walked down, but since our hands were full we weren't able to use the cloths," he said.

Another problem, Sinkule said, was the fact that all of the candles in the restaurant had already been taken. "Fortunately,

the man's wife had a pen light that we used to help us down," he said.

Still, even with the light, walking down winding flights of steps was not without its problems.



Photos by Sgt. Kevin Hynes

HIGH RISE HERO - Spc. Mike Sinkule stands in front of the FirstTier Building in Lincoln, Neb.

fire. The next morning Sinkule's photo, as well as other employees, appeared in the *Lincoln Star* and *Journal* newspapers along side of a story detailing the fire and their exploits.

Being a hero wasn't exactly what Sinkule had thought it would be, however. Because he was forced to leave the building in a hurry, he was unable to retrieve the keys to his car. The next day when he returned to pick up his car, he found that it had been ticketed and towed away.

Fortunately he was able to explain his situation to the Lincoln Police Department and get his car without having to pay the fine or towing charges.

Sinkule said he would do it all over again if faced with the same situation.

"I was just glad to be able to help someone who couldn't help himself."

"I was just glad to be able to help someone who couldn't help himself"



Spc. Mike Sinkule

from the fire below rolled into the club.

"Nobody really panicked," said Sinkule. "But they did start moving a lot faster."

In order to combat the smoke

NEWS

MAKERS

Compiled by Lt. Col. Fred S. Lydick
National Guard Bureau

Richard Spooner was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General in the District of Columbia Air National Guard recently. He pinned on his first star in a ceremony held at the Bolling AFB Officer's Club in Washington, D.C. As the top D.C. Air Guard officer, Spooner is responsible for command and control of the DCANG's flying and ground units located at Andrews AFB, Md.

SSgt. Ronald Trippodo, an aircraft mechanic with the 109th Airlift Squadron's maintenance section, New York Air National Guard, saved the life of a motorist by administering emergency Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation. The motorist suffered a cardiac seizure, lost control of his vehicle and ran off the roadway hitting a tree. Trippodo was the first person on the scene and began administering CPR until another motorist stopped to help. Local emergency medical officials praised the two for their actions in saving the victim.

Sgt. Kevin Buss, Company C, 434th Main Support Battalion, Minnesota Army National Guard is also credited with taking lifesaving measures on behalf of an accident victim. A couple riding a tandem bicycle last spring, was hit by a car. One of the first motorists to stop, Buss noticed one of the victims was helpless from his injuries and was bleeding so severely that he could possibly bleed to death unless immediate action was taken. Buss applied lessons he learned from combat lifesaver training to control the bleeding until EMTs arrived.

An NCO with the Arizona Air National Guard recently celebrated a first of its kind graduation. SSgt. Lawrence Sims, 161st Air Refueling Group, was the first African-American male graduate of the Arizona State University College of Nursing. Sims originally joined the active Air Force in 1985 and transferred to the National Guard in 1991. Sims plans to become a doctor.

SSgt. Ricky D. Wise, customer service specialist, 134th Mission Support Flight, was presented the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) and the Realtime Automated Personnel Identification System (RAPIDS) Certificate of Excellence Award at the DEERS Training Clinic in San Diego recently. Wise was selected by the National Guard Bureau as the 1994 recipient whose support of DEERS and RAPIDS warranted special recognition.

The 119th Fighter Group, North Dakota Air National Guard, has been selected as a recipient of the 1994 Air National Guard Supply Effectiveness Award. The purpose of the award is to promote maximum supply efficiency and to recognize outstanding supply activities. The 119th Fighter Group will now compete for the Air Force-level award.

Col. Walter T. Thilly officially took command of the Maryland Air National Guard's 175th Fighter Group in a change of command ceremony held at Martin State Airport recently. During the ceremony, the 175th was presented with its third consecutive Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.



Brig. Gen.
Richard
Spooner.



Silver Star recipient Carmine Rivera (left) with Rhode Island TAG Maj. Gen. N. Andre Trudeau.



SSgt. Kenneth Sims
graduates Arizona
State's nursing school.



The 175th Fighter Group's new
commander, Col. Walter Thilly.

Carmine V. Rivera of North Providence R. I. was presented the Silver Star in January, nearly 50 years to the day of his gallantry in combat. Rivera enlisted in the Rhode Island National Guard in 1939 and was serving with the 43d Infantry Division at the time of his action. Rivera left his foxhole while under enemy machine-gun fire to rescue two soldiers. While attempting to rescue a third comrade, he was severely wounded. Rivera's son pursued the formal recognition for his father's actions through his Congressman who worked with the Army to facilitate accreditation of the events.

The 128th Security Police and 128th Air Refueling Group, Wisconsin Air National Guard, collected a large bin of toys for the Goodwill Industries that were distributed to needy children during the Christmas holidays. The toy collection effort was coordinated by TSgt. Dennis Wachowiak. "The 'Toys from Cops' toy collection was a huge success. This was our first year in this program and we're happy it turned out so well," he said.

TSgt. Michelle Hall, 159th Fighter Group, Louisiana Air National Guard, received the Air National Guard Outstanding Senior Supply Technician Award. She previously earned the same award at the state level. Hall was recognized for her initiatives in using automation, improving training, record keeping, bettering supply operations, and reconstituting publications, forms and file plans for her unit.

While her mother was deployed to Puerto Rico in support of Operation Uphold Democracy, 12-year-old Cerene Himes was home writing an essay that would earn national honors. Cerene, the daughter of TSgt. Deidre Markle and SrA. Tim Markle, 193d Special Operations Group, Pennsylvania Air National Guard, won the essay category of the first National Guard Poster and Essay Contest conducted as part of the Guard's Drug Demand Reduction Program.

The National Guard Marksmanship Training Unit has been selected to receive the 1994 Air Force Organizational Excellence Award. This award was established in 1969 by the Secretary of the Air Force and is awarded for exceptionally outstanding achievement that clearly sets the organization above and apart from similar organizations.

The following individuals have been selected as the Air National Guard recipients/Air Force nominees in the 1994 Individual Security Police Awards Program:

Officer: Capt. Terrance A. Sieben, 133rd SP Squadron, Minn.

NCO: MSgt. Keith W. Mazzatenta, 175th SP Squadron, Md.

Airman, Security Specialty: SSgt. Joseph A. Sanfellipo, 128th SP Squadron, Wis.

Airman, Law Enforcement Specialty: TSgt. Michael V. Crivello, 128th SP Squadron, Wis.

Outstanding Reserve Component Combat Arms Training and Maintenance Airman: SSgt. Kurt L. Moore, 128th SP Squadron, Wis.

Chilled, but ready

Nebraska's 135th Signal Battalion communicates come rain, snow, sleet or hail

By Sgt. Kevin Hynes
Nebraska National Guard

Even the bone-chilling winds of a late January ice storm couldn't keep the signalmen of the Nebraska Army National Guard's Company B (Area Signal Company), 135th Signal Battalion, from hitting the road for training Jan. 28.

According to SFC Larry Blecha, unit readiness sergeant, the 71-man unit spent their January drill training on a variety of tactical and nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) tasks designed to get them out of the classroom and into the elements.

"We really wanted to conduct some fun training that could be done in the winter months regardless of the weather," said Blecha. "Due to the normal 'boredness' of January and February drills, we wanted to get the soldiers outside. It would definitely be better than sitting in the armory and going nuts or sitting in classrooms going goofy."

When the unit hit upon, Blecha said, was a two-day exercise, in which the Guardmembers would work on such common tasks as NBC reconnaissance, masking procedures, tactical road marches, site quartering methods, as well as basic squad-level tactics such as securing an area and conducting security missions.

Initially, unit officials had hoped to do even more outside training including setting up their heavy equipment and radio

antennas at a tactical site located near the unit's home station of Seward.

However, a heavy rain on Jan. 27 turned the training area into a gooey, muddy mess. A sudden ice storm then made it impossible for the Guardmembers to set up their signal equipment.

Yet, where others may have faltered and called off the exercise, Co. B excelled.

"When we found out that we weren't going to be able to go into the training area with our vehicles, we just revamped our schedule and incorporated more NBC and site quartering training," said Blecha.

In spite of the weather, the Guardmembers were uniformly looking toward venturing out into the elements and training hard.

"I'm looking forward to it," said Spc. Jason J. Hurt, Lincoln, a mobile systems equipment operator during a break in the classroom training that morning.

"It's something different and that's good. It gets kind of routine around here in the winter, so at least this is something out of the ordinary," Hurt said as he stood on the front steps of the armory, watching the large flakes of ice and snow fall around him. "Plus we really need the practice."

Sgt. Michael Pechar, Bellevue, unit NBC sergeant, seemed to echo the unit's longing to break the routine.

"NBC training is not a punishment. It's something that has to be done. When done right, who knows, you might even

like it," Pechar told the Guardmembers as he kicked-off his class on NBC reconnaissance.

A split second later he added, "I doubt it, but we're going to try," exploding the classroom into a fit of laughter.

Blecha said the training incorporated interesting training designed around the weather.

"Because everyone was in a vehicle, when they had to get out and check for contamination, it was done in such a way so that they wouldn't be outside long enough to get cold," he said.

"Also, splitting the unit into two teams that each took a separate route to the tactical site, enabled us to conduct a round-robin type of training at the site with one team while the other finished its roadmarch," Blecha said. "That way nobody stood around, getting cold, waiting for the others to get finished."



Photo by Sgt. Kevin Hynes

COLD STICK - Nebraska's Sgt. Douglas Luethke, a member of the 135th Signal Battalion, checks the oil on a High Mobility, Multi purpose, Wheeled Vehicle.

Blecha said he received rave reviews from the participants.

"Our AAR (after action review) was great. Everyone said they loved it," he said. "I received only one bad comment and that was that the class portion of the training was too long and drawn out."

"The older soldiers, especially those that have been away from basic training for a long time, really liked the refresher training they got on general squad tactics," Blecha said. "It was great that everyone got the chance to do something they may not have done before. Now if it's thrown at them during annual training, they're ready."



Photo by Sgt. Alan Gilman

MARCHING to their own BEAT

Thirty-three members of Connecticut's 102nd Army National Guard Band, based in Bristol, march in a civic-military parade in Lingayen, Philippines. The band was in the Philippines celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Lingayen Gulf Landings. "My first annual training in the Guard," observed percussionist PFC David Finn, "is surely going to be the most memorable."



STATES

- Wisconsin salute
- PA's A-10
- Texas crackdown

ILLINOIS

About 150 Guardmembers from the 183rd Fighter Group, the "Fly'n Illini," participated in Operation Cobra Gold, an annual exercise sponsored by the Royal Thai Armed Forces.

The exercise has been held for the last 13 years at bases in Thailand, but this was the first time an Air Guard fighter unit participated. The trip from Springfield, Ill., to Korat AB in Thailand was the longest in the history of the 183rd.

The scenario was designed to exercise a mix of U.S. and Thai forces, familiarize units with Pacific rim environments, and train new tactics in a joint, allied environment. Exercise Cobra Gold will occur again later this spring.

MASSACHUSETTS

Eleven members of the 104th Fighter Group returned in December from successful peacekeeping duties at Aviano Air Base Italy.

The Guardmembers were part of a multi-state National Guard contingent that helped enforce a NATO no-fly zone over Bosnia-Herzegovina. Although only 11 deployed, more than 200 of the 104th's pilots and crew members volunteered for the mission.

Other members of the contingent came from Connecticut, Maryland and Michigan. The National Guardmembers served 30-day tours to give active-duty airmen a break for the holidays.

NOT FORGOTTEN

A rifle squad renders a 21-gun salute at a ceremony honoring six members of Wisconsin's 128th Air Refueling Group who perished in the explosion of a KC-135R on Dec. 10, 1993. Col. G. Schmitz, 128th commander, renewed the unit's pledge of never forgetting. "Together we share the responsibility of remembering the men who died while performing service for their state and their nation."



Photo courtesy Wisconsin Guard

TEXAS

Members of the Texas Army National Guard assisted residents of Taylor by demolishing crack houses as part of a community effort to combat drug activity in the area.

A citizen's group called "Turn Around Taylor" has been working to reduce drug use and gang activity and requested the Guard to join their efforts.

The Guardmembers, led by the Texas National Guard Counterdrug Task Force, demolished several buildings. Officials have identified about 100 additional structures for possible future demolition. Crowds cheered as the walls of the former crack houses came down under the pressure of the Texas Guard's 24-ton bulldozer.

NORTH CAROLINA

Guardmembers from the 5th Battalion, 113th Field Artillery are serious about adding value to their communities. They formed a non-profit organization named the "Guard Cares Association."

The Guardmembers, along with their spouses and civilian volunteers improved the lives of homeless and disadvantaged children and senior citizens. They threw a Christmas party, provided food to shelters and rest homes, coats and clothing to the Salvation Army, and firewood to families who could not afford it. They are presently raising funds to send needy kids to summer camp along with several other charitable projects.

PENNSYLVANIA

Several members of the 111th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, part of the Keystone State's 111th Fighter Group, had a rather challenging experience recently, as they completely re-assembled an A-10A "Warthog."

The project, intended as a static display for the New Cumberland Army Depot, began last August.

The effort took tremendous coordination between organizations, directorates and staffs. Transportation, facilities, safety and emergency procedures, tools and special equipment, security, disposal of hazardous materials and recovery of serviceable items were but a few of the numerous items that needed to be resolved.

"It was a unique training experience for us," said CMSgt. Ernie Scardecchio, chief of the field maintenance branch. "Units in the field never totally assemble an aircraft once it's assembled at the factory. We had to be creative in many ways, but the



Photo courtesy of the Pennsylvania National Guard

outcome was a real success for us. New Cumberland has a static display aircraft they can be proud of for many years."

Team member's from the 111th and staff at New Cumberland Army Depot put in a lot of time and

effort, including their weekends and off-duty time, into the project.

WARTHOG HEAVEN - A model A-10 stands proud in New Cumberland, Pa.



The National Guard in World War II

Discovering the atrocities of war

In late April 1945 the end of war in Europe was fast approaching. Storming eastward through a collapsing and demoralized Germany, U.S. forces were taking city after city with the Russian Army doing the same westward.

It was during this period that American GIs of the 42nd and 45th Infantry Divisions came face-to-face with the barbaric German atrocities committed at a concentration camp near the town of Dachau, Germany.

The 45th Infantry "Thunderbird" Division was a National Guard Division mobilized into federal service in 1941 from the states of Oklahoma, Colorado and New Mexico. The 42nd Infantry "Rainbow" Division was first organized during World War I as a National Guard division and now as an Army of the United States division consisting of draftees from many states.

Nothing had prepared these young men—many of them raised on farms—for the horror they found at Dachau.

In 1933, the Germans built a concentration camp on the outskirts of Dachau, located 15 miles northwest of Munich, to house 65,000 prisoners.

The camp took its name from the nearby town and had one large compound with several satellite work camps. It was enclosed by an electric barbed-wire fence, a water-filled moat and guard towers. The camp was divided into two sections. One housed the garrison for several hundred SS troops. The second area consisted of 34 wooden barracks, a gas chamber and crematorium designed for "undesirables."

In late April, the "Thunderbird" Division was given the mission of taking Munich, the cradle of Nazism. Assigned the mission of entering and securing the city was a task force consisting of the 3rd Battalion, 157th Infantry Regiment (Colorado National Guard), the 191st Tank Battalion (New York, Massachusetts, and Virginia National Guards) Battery C, 158th Field Artillery (Oklahoma National Guard) and the 120th Engineer Battalion (New Mexico National Guard).

The task force command was given to Lt. Col. Felix L. Sparks, commander of 3rd Battalion, 157th Infantry.

On the morning of April 29, the task force renewed the attack toward Munich. At 7:30 a.m., the 3rd Battalion received a frag order to proceed to the Dachau concentration camp, secure it and allow no one to enter or leave. Sparks assigned this mission to his reserve, Company I, and a machinegun section from Company M. The remainder of the task force continued the attack on Munich.

Sparks accompanied Company I. As the unit approached the camp, evidence of Dachau's horrors was apparent in the 40 or so railway cars lining the camp's entrance. Each railway car was filled with corpses of men and women. After a brief search of the railway cars, no sign of life was evident.

I Company soldiers reassembled into battle formation and moved toward the main compound. Scaling a brick

Maj. JEFF POPE
NGB Historian



wall to enter the main garrison, the "Thunderbirds" quickly neutralized the German defenders and seized the camp and about 200 German prisoners. During the brief battle, several SS troops in guard towers were killed along with a number of vicious guard dogs. It was later revealed that most of the garrison's soldiers—more than half of them officers—fled the camp the previous day.

Sparks recalled his first thoughts: "My senses were numbed. A row of small cement structures near the prison entrance contained a coal-fired crematorium, a gas chamber and rooms piled high with naked and emaciated human corpses."

"A number of Company I men, all battled hardened veterans, became extremely distraught; some cried, while others became enraged."

In short time, the approximately 30,000 camp prisoners awoke from a zombie-like trance and realized the significance of the ensuing liberation. In anger, the prisoners retaliated against camp informers by literally ripping them apart. An hour after entering the camp, Sparks restored order to the chaos and set up a perimeter guard. In all, about 3,500 bodies were found stacked like wood in several locations around the compound.

Shortly after order was restored, elements of the 42nd Infantry Division began arriving in the vicinity of the camp. For a brief moment, the liberated prisoners attempted to escape the camp. The "Thunderbirds" were forced to shoot above the prisoner's heads forcing them back into the compound.

Sparks was relieved from duties at Dachau the following morning, allowing him to resume his attack on Munich.

During the attack, a slave labor camp was encountered containing approximately 8,000 prisoners. Company K was assigned the mission of securing the camp and Sparks and his battalion moved again on Munich.

On April 30, the 45th Infantry Division, along with other elements of XV Corps, captured Munich. Munich, bombarded for several weeks by artillery, offered little resistance. It was literally a ghost town.

The 45th Infantry Division occupied Munich until the end of the war. They established and maintained a military government in a city that once held the distinction of being the birthplace of the Nazi Party.

Editor's Note: Sparks contributed to this story through his monograph entitled "Dachau and its Liberation." He retired from the Colorado Army Guard as a brigadier general. He also served as a Colorado Supreme Court justice.

LIBERATED - Prisoners interned at the concentration camp in Dachau, Germany, celebrate after being freed.



Photo courtesy NGB Historical Services



TRAINING

Indiana's Sgt. David Strobel
has made friends with bats

CAVE dweller

By Spc. Michael J. Ableman
U.S. Army

His mud-covered boots tread anxiously across faded leaves that lay dormant in the freezing backwoods of southern Indiana.

With a canine's sense of direction, he carefully maneuvers himself down a slippery embankment.

He glances at his watch. Every second counts. He has nine hours until his wife sends out the rescue team.

He smiles as he reaches the edge of a small, dark opening in the ground.

"Yes," he exclaims. "Finally, I'm here!"

Preparing himself for a claustrophobic's nightmare, Sgt. David M. Strobel, 433rd Personnel Services Detachment, Indiana Army National Guard, dons knee and elbow pads and a safety helmet. "I know a guy who went into this cave without knee pads and ended up with knees like hamburger."

Securing his bag filled with trail-mix, his much-needed flashlight, additional batteries and light-sticks, Strobel places it over his shoulder and under his arm.

The last of his equipment has been fastened. It's time to go.

The 36-year old reaches for his helmet-mounted light and switches it on. Although its illumination is barely seen in the hazy daylight, it's Strobel's main source of light while underground.

He lowers his 5-foot-11-inch wiry frame into the crevice, disappearing into what could be total darkness if his equipment should fail.

Safety and being prepared for the unknown come second nature to Strobel since he's been a motorcycle safety instructor for eight years.

He enters one of many caves that form intricate underground patterns throughout the countryside south of Bloomington, Ind. He has been in this particular cave four times.

Five feet into the cave, his shoulders embrace the rock, his back engulfed in mud, and thousands upon thousands of pounds of mother nature scrape his chest



Indiana Army Guard's Sgt. David Strobel emerges from a hole (bottom photo), finds daylight (left) and squeezes through an eight-inch gap (below).



Photos by Spc. Michael J. Ableman



and helmet as he crawls on his back through the cave's opening.

After a few hours of painstakingly shoving his 165-pound body through 24-inch openings like a hamster in an undersized maze, Strobel spots a new tunnel.

"I haven't been in there before," he said squinting his eyes to see where the tunnel may lead. "Let's explore."

Meanwhile, his seven-year-old son, Christopher has been trailing him the entire time.

"I like caving, but I don't like getting wet!" said Christopher who squeezes a little easier than his dad through a small

opening.

There's no room to panic when underground, explains Strobel who has been caving for 19 years. The formations have been in place for thousands of years, but if you lose your cool, it can feel like their entire weight is coming down, suffocating you.

With a maximum of five feet visibility, the cramped tunnel suddenly opens into a massive room with a 30-foot ceiling.

Break time.

The large area now serves as a well-deserved resting area to stretch, re-check equipment and snack on trail-mix.

Strobel, who works as a personal records clerk for the Military Department of Indiana at Stout Field, also enjoys skydiving.

"Caving is another adventure I enjoy when I can't skydive," he said.

After eight hours of crawling beneath the earth's surface, the supply of trail-mix runs low, and bodies become weary; but as carefully planned by Strobel they are near the end of the cave.

Exiting where the journey began, Strobel smiles and inhales the outside air. Looking at his watch, he says, "Good timing. There's no rescue party here."