



Fact Sheet: The National Guard In the Korean War

Army National Guard

On June 30th, 1950, five days after North Korea invaded South Korea, President Truman signed the Selective Service Extension Act. It continued the draft that had been in effect since 1948 and authorized the call-up of reserve component units for Federal service not to exceed 21 months (later 24 months).

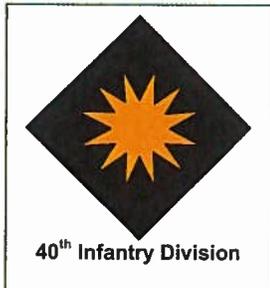
While a small mobilization was planned at first, the disastrous setbacks of those first few weeks of the war made it apparent that a far larger number of Guard and Reserve units would be needed. In early September four National Guard Infantry Divisions were called to active duty – the 40th (California), 45th (Oklahoma), 28th (Pennsylvania) and 43^d (Connecticut, Rhode Island, Vermont). The 40th and 45th would both see combat in Korea, while the 28th and 43^d would be sent to Germany to help bolster NATO against the ever-present threat of Soviet invasion.

These four divisions were among the first of over 700 Army National Guard units (including four additional divisions) mobilized for the Korean War. The 138,600 Guardsmen called represented 37 % of the Army National Guard. In addition to the 40th and 45th Infantry Divisions, 42 other Army Guard units were sent to Korea and thousands of individual Guardsmen went as replacements.



45th Infantry Division

Most Guard units began arriving in Korea in early 1951, at the same time massive Chinese and North Korean attacks were pushing UN forces south. That spring, as UN forces regrouped and repulsed these massive attacks, three National Guard Artillery battalions, the 196th (Tennessee) the 937th (Arkansas) and the 300th (Wyoming), and a Transportation Company - the 252^d Transportation Truck Company (Alabama) - won Presidential Unit Citations, the highest award that the Army can bestow upon a unit. A fifth Presidential Unit Citation was awarded to Pennsylvania's 176th Armored Field Artillery battalion for heroic action in June 1953; in addition, 18 Army National Guard units in Korea were recognized for their superior service with the Army's Meritorious Unit Commendation.



40th Infantry Division

By the summer of 1951, UN forces were mounting successful limited attacks and peace negotiations had begun. Meanwhile, the 40th and 45th Divisions remained in Japan, where they had trained and served as the defensive garrison for the island since April 1951. The UN Commander, General Matthew Ridgeway,



was reluctant to send these divisions to Korea, preferring instead to use their soldiers as individual replacements for units already there. Finally, under pressure from Congress and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Ridgeway agreed in November 1951 to a "swap in place" of the two Guard divisions for two of his combat-worn divisions.

The following month Oklahoma's 45th Infantry Division switched places with the 1st Cavalry Division, and in January 1952 California's 40th Infantry Division switched places with the 24th Infantry Division. While the Guardsmen complained about the miserable condition of the vehicles and equipment they "inherited" from the units they replaced, the relative lull in combat brought on by the frigid Korean winter gave them time to make repairs before more active hostilities resumed in the spring.

By the spring of 1952, most of the Guardsmen who had been called up in the late summer of 1950 were nearing the end of their term of active Federal service, and began rotating home in the summer of 1952. While the Guardsmen went home, the Guard units – now filled with draftees and enlistees – continued on active duty, even after the war ended in July 1953. Not until 1957 was every unit Federalized for service in Korea returned to state control.

Air National Guard

Korea was the Air National Guard's first war as a separate reserve component of the Air Force. In all, 486 units, including 22 of 27 Air National Guard Wings and 67 of 84 flying squadrons totaling 45,594 officers and men, were called to active Federal service between October 1950 and April 1951. This was approximately 80% of the Air Guard's total personnel strength.

Two wings, the 116th Fighter Bomber Wing (Georgia) and the 136th Fighter Bomber Wing (Texas) fought in Korea, entering combat in May 1951. Both wings had to transition from outdated aircraft to the F-84 Thunderjet before shipping off to war. The majority of the missions assigned to the F-84 in Korea were close air support of friendly ground troops and aerial interdiction of enemy troops and supplies behind the front lines. Three Air Guard wings deployed to Europe to reinforce NATO – the 117th (Alabama), 123rd (Kentucky) and 126th (Illinois).

Months before the two Air Guard wings entered combat in Korea, hundreds of individual guardsmen had shipped over to augment US Air Force units. Four Air Guard pilots became aces in USAF units flying F-86 Sabrejets. The two Guard wings also provided air defense for Japan.

The Air Force, which had little use for the Air Guard before the outbreak of the Korean War, was impressed by the performance it received from its citizen-airmen. Air Guardsmen flew 39,530 combat sorties, destroying 39 enemy aircraft and damaging another 149. The Air Force discovered that the Air Guard had a level experience and that paid big dividends in combat in Korea maturity - 40% of the men mobilized were veterans with two or more years of service during World War II. In fact, a Fifth Air Force survey conducted in 1951 showed that 80% of that unit's personnel were Reservists and Guardsmen recalled to active service.



Air National Guard Units to Deploy to Korea

| Unit | State | Arrived Overseas |
|---|-------|------------------|
| 116 th Fighter Bomber Wing | GA | July 51 |
| 136 th Fighter Bomber Wing | TX | May 51 |
| 111 th Fighter Bomber Squadron | TX | May 51 |
| 154 th Fighter Bomber Squadron | AR | May 51 |
| 158 th Fighter Bomber Squadron | GA | July 51 |
| 159 th Fighter Bomber Squadron | FL | July 51 |
| 182 ^d Fighter Bomber Squadron | TX | May 51 |
| 196 th Fighter Bomber Squadron | CA | July 51 |

Army National Guard Units to Deploy to Korea

| Unit | State | Arrived Korea |
|--|-------|---------------|
| 30 th Ordnance Bn, HHD | NJ | 21 Mar 51 |
| 32 ^d Ordnance Bn, HHD | IL | 10 Jul 51 |
| 32 ^d Quartermaster Group, HHD | PA | 17 Feb 52 |
| 40 th Infantry Division | CA | 11 Jan 52 |
| 45 th Infantry Division | OK | 5 Dec 51 |
| 65 th Infantry Regiment | **PR | 23 Sep 50 |
| 101 st Signal Battalion | NY | 7 Apr 51 |
| 106 th Ordnance (H) Maintenance Co | MO | 26 Mar 51 |
| 107 th Ordnance (M) Maintenance Co | MI | 9 Mar 51 |
| 107 th Transportation Truck Co | AL | 8 Jan 51 |
| 116 th Engineer Combat Battalion | ID | 28 Feb 51 |
| 121 st Transportation Truck Co | PA | 4 Jan 51 |
| 131 st Transportation Truck Co | PA | 1 Jan 51 |
| 138 th Engineer Pontoon Bridge Co | MS | 16 Feb 51 |
| 145 th Field Artillery Battalion | UT | 5 Dec 51 |
| 151 st Engineer Combat Battalion | AL | 9 Feb 51 |
| 167 th Transportation Truck Bn, HHD | PA | 1 Jan 51 |
| 176 th Armored Field Artillery Bn | PA | 17 Feb 51 |
| 194 th Engineer Combat Battalion | TN | 16 Feb 51 |
| 196 th Field Artillery Battalion | TN | 9 Feb 51 |
| 204 th Field Artillery Battalion | UT | 2 Feb 51 |
| 213 th AAA Gun Battalion | PA | 11 Nov 51 |
| 213 th Armored Field Artillery Bn | UT | 16 Feb 51 |
| 217 th Medical Collecting Company | AR | 4 May 51 |
| 227 th AAA Group, HHB | FL | 21 Mar 52 |
| 231 st Transportation Truck Bn, HHD | MD | 1 Jan 51 |
| 235 th Field Artillery Observation Bn | PA | 10 Dec 52 |
| 252 ^d Transportation Truck Co | AL | 1 Jan 51 |
| 300 th Armored Field Artillery Bn | WY | 16 Feb 51 |
| 378 th Engineer Combat Battalion | NC | 24 Feb 51 |
| 568 th Ordnance (H) Maintenance Co | TN | 19 Mar 51 |
| 623 ^d Field Artillery Battalion | KY | 23 Dec 51 |
| 715 th Transportation Truck Co | DC | 5 Jan 51 |
| 726 th Transportation Truck Co | MD | 31 Dec 50 |
| 773 ^d AAA Gun Battalion | NY | 18 Oct 52 |
| 936 th Field Artillery Battalion | AR | 10 Feb 51 |
| 937 th Field Artillery Battalion | AR | 10 Feb 51 |
| 955 th Field Artillery Battalion | NY | 2 Feb 51 |
| 987 th Armored Field Artillery Bn | OH | 16 Feb 51 |
| 1092 ^d Engineer Combat Battalion | WV | 3 Mar 51 |
| 1169 th Engineer Group HHC | AL | 28 Feb 51 |
| 1343 ^d Engineer Combat Battalion | AL | 9 Feb 51 |
| 1437 th Engineer Treadway Bridge Co | MI | 2 Mar 51 |
| 2998 th Engineer Treadway Bridge Co | TN | 27 Feb 51 |

Key to abbreviations: AAA = Anti-Aircraft Artillery; Bn = Battalion; Co = Company; HHD = Headquarters and Headquarters Battery; HHC = Headquarters and Headquarters Company; HHD = Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment; (H) = Heavy, (M) = Medium

** The 65th Infantry Regiment was part of the Regular Army from 1908 until 1959, when it was allotted to the Puerto Rican National Guard. However, the history of this regiment is in many ways more typical of a National Guard regiment than one from the Regular Army. First organized in 1899 as a Puerto Rican volunteer regiment, it was later transferred to the Regular Army. During its 50 years in the Regular Army it was continually stationed in Puerto Rico and the soldiers recruited solely from the local population.

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