



LTG Emmett H. Walker Jr., Chief, National Guard Bureau

RETURN FIRE

NATIONAL GUARD TRAINING IN CENTRAL AMERICA

National Guard involvement in U.S. exercises in Central America is part of our continuing efforts to provide the maximum amount of diversified, realistic and deployed training for our National Guard members.

When our nation made the decision in the early 1970s to move to a volunteer military and reduce the size of the standing Army, the role of the National Guard in the Defense equation significantly changed.

As the Total Force Policy took full effect, we saw the National Guard being relied upon in every major U.S. defense scenario. We've seen the National Guard grow in numbers. We've seen the Guard receive better, more modern and new equipment. In short, we've seen America's investment in the National Guard grow many fold. The support the Guard has received is directly proportional to the reliance and trust being placed upon it. This is significant for many reasons. But most importantly, because it placed a great responsibility on the military and civilian leaders of the National Guard to ensure that their soldiers and airmen have every opportunity to receive the finest training possible.

The kind of training I'm talking about is that which ensures—should the nation ask—that the soldier or airman is confident he can fight and win, and stand the best chance of survival on the battlefield of the future. That's the bottom line, the reason we have seen the diversification of National Guard training here and abroad—is to ensure we meet our moral and ethical obligations to our people. Our people expect the best training we can provide. And we owe them no less than the best we are able to give.

The other major significance is return on investment. The federal government, in increasing the resourcing levels of the National Guard, expects the National Guard to contribute to the

national policy objectives on an increased level—in peace and war.

National Guard training in Central America is not new this year. The Guard has been involved in training and exercises in Central America since 1972. What concerns me is that many of the critics you and your fellow governors must face are talking half-truths or complete untruths. The truth is the National Guard is performing training in Central America. We are conducting training we are required to perform, training for which Congress has appropriated money. It is valid, necessary, meaningful training in a tropical environment not available in the United States or in other overseas locations.

We exercise caution to ensure troop safety no differently than we do when we send our troops to Germany, Italy, Korea or any other part of the world. We have established a safety zone between American forces and the Nicaraguan border specifically to preclude an inadvertent border crossing or any other potentially adverse incident. I can tell you for a fact that our leadership at Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) is acutely sensitive to this matter and is diligent in ensuring that we take every precaution necessary—and we do.

We are not now nor have we in the past trained members of the democratic resistance. National Guardsmen training in Central America are there to train with their units or other American or Honduran units.

I have been on the ground with our troops in Central America. I have talked with the native people at the exercise areas and with our troops. I have yet to hear a soldier say he felt unsafe, threatened or in any other way in harms way. In fact, I have had many of our people say that the training they were receiving was the finest they had received in their careers, and many express a desire to stay longer

or return soon. These are not just the comments of colonels and generals, but from soldiers of every rank.

Local people in the exercise areas say they welcome and support Americans. Many of the local population said they appreciated the American presence because it ensured peace in their country.

We have a good track record. We have developed positive relationships. And we have no reason to believe that the status quo will change. Our troops are receiving "real world" training in a unique and challenging environment, and the result of the exercises in many instances provides additional humanitarian benefit.

There is one particular ancillary benefit to National Guard involvement in Central American exercises. Most of the countries in which they are conducted are new democracies only recently released from military rule. When the Guard is involved in these exercises, we truly have a cross-section of American society involved. The Guard represents the very essence of our democracy—the citizen soldier. It clearly typifies the subordination of the military to civilian control, the very goal all these nations aspire to. The Guard, therefore, provides an excellent role model for each of these countries.

The other major ancillary benefit is the great wealth of knowledge brought to bear by Guard participation. Just as examples let me relate a few stories. The Texas armor task force (see NATIONAL GUARD, July 1985) that deployed to Honduras last year was composed principally of cattle farmers. As it turned out, the Texans deployed to an area of Honduras where cattle farming was practiced. The local cattle farmers were faced with some major cattle nutrition and health problems. Some of the Texans on their own time worked with the

(Continued on Page 52)

National Guard

NATIONAL GUARD

MAY 1986

Volume XL, Number 5



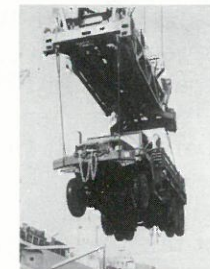
COVER:

155mm self-propelled howitzers from the 1st Battalion, 120th Field Artillery, 32d Infantry Brigade (Mech), Wisconsin Army National Guard, roll through a German village enroute to the bivouac area in Tannesberg, West Germany. Photo, CPT Jean Marie Brawders. Design, Johnson Design Group.

FEATURES

"Red Arrow" Deploys to Germany 16

The 32d Infantry Brigade (Mech), Wisconsin Army National Guard, deployed 3,300 troops and all its equipment to become the largest peacetime deployment of a reserve component unit of its size. All total, some 5,000 Wisconsin Guardsmen participated in REFORGER and CERTAIN SENTINEL.



New York Takes On a Winged Giant 26

The C-5A "Galaxy" is the world's largest aircraft and it has gone to the 105th Military Airlift Group, New York Air Guard, which previously flew one of the smallest aircraft, the O-2 reconnaissance plane. More changes are being taken on as the 105th makes the conversion.



Fitness is the Body's PMCS 32

Preventive maintenance makes excellent sense for tanks, rifles and bodies. A military doctor lays out the many ways you can perform preventive maintenance on your body to not only promote fitness but help prevent disease.



Utah Army Guard Pilots Wear Red 36

Utah Guardsmen from the Attack Helicopter Troop, 163d Armored Cavalry Regiment, are giving the Marine Air Weapons and Tactics Squadron One a run for its money. As part of the squadron's special weapons and tactics instructor course, the Utah pilots are playing the aggressor.



DISPLAY DETERMINATION '85 41

NATIONAL GUARD highlights three Guard units at this year's DISPLAY DETERMINATION. Members of the 825th Military Police Company, District of Columbia Army Guard; the 1569th Transportation Company, New York Army Guard; and the 228th Combat Information Systems Squadron, Tennessee Air Guard, found the exercise rewarding.



DEPARTMENTS

| | |
|----------------------|----|
| Return Fire | 2 |
| Washington Tie-Line | 4 |
| Views from the Field | 6 |
| Newsbreaks | 10 |
| Guard Stars | 12 |
| Capital Focus | 14 |
| Pentagon Paragraphs | 15 |
| People | 45 |
| Posting the Guard | 48 |
| Publisher's Notebook | 54 |

PUBLICATION STAFF

MG Bruce Jacobs (ret.)
Publisher

LTC Reid K. Beveridge
Editor

2LT Pamela A. Kane
Assistant Editor

CPT Jean Marie Brawders
Assistant Editor

John E. Bibb
Business Manager

Don DesJardins
Circulation Manager

NATIONAL GUARD, May 1986. The NATIONAL GUARD magazine (ISSN 0163-3945) is published monthly, by the National Guard Association of the United States, with editorial and advertising offices at One Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. Telephone (202) 789-0031. Second class postage paid at Washington, D.C., and at additional mailing offices. Copyright 1986 by the National Guard Association of the U.S. All rights reserved. All members of the NGAUS receive NATIONAL GUARD. Nonmember subscriptions: \$10 per year. The Editor welcomes original articles bearing on national defense, with emphasis on application to or implications for the National Guard. Postmaster: Send Form 3579 to NATIONAL GUARD, One Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001.