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OCTOBER, 1972

## I am the Guard

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# Guardsmen Uphold the Creed

By BRUCE WHITMAN

*Patriot-News Staff Writer*

NEW CUMBERLAND — In an office of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard at Capital City Airport there hangs a creed on a bulletin board which wraps up the purpose and tradition of the Guard in a few well written sentences.

"I am the Guard," it reads. "Civilian in peace, soldier in war."

One passage in particular was appropriate during the early days of the flood destruction brought by Hurricane Agnes.

"I was at Johnstown, where the raging waters boomed down the valley. I cradled the crying child in my arms and saw the terror leave her eyes. The stricken knew the comfort of my skill. I dropped the food that fed the starving beast. I have faced forward to the tornado, the typhoon and the horror of hurricane and flood. I am the Guard."

It could well be that this creed will include an addition in years to come. It might read like this:

*"I am the Guard. I flew the raging Susquehanna, snatching people off rooftops. I flew in food for hungry mouths and medicine to fight off the threat of epidemic. I left my home and*

*loved ones to be of help to others. I am the Guard."*

In time of peace we tend to forget the importance of our National Guard. We laugh and call them "Weekend Warriors."

We know the individual Guardsman as our neighbor; the guy who runs the filling station; the kid clerking in the supermarket.

Nobody laughed and called the crew of a Huey helicopter "Weekend Warriors" when a family near Enola along the Susquehanna River was pulled to safety through a hole chopped in the roof. And no one laughed when the pilot of that aircraft, a two-tour Vietnam veteran, felt bad about leaving a family pet dog behind.

No one cracked jokes when Guard helicopters flew the injured and sick to area hospitals.

Hundreds of lives were saved in the immediate Harrisburg area alone by National Guard helicopter crews. Flying under adverse conditions and often without regard for their own safety, helicopter crews did what had to be done. When the disaster was at its peak "above and beyond" became SOP (standard operating procedure).



Not all of the thousands of Guardsmen who engage in "domestic action" projects benefit from assistance such as PFC John Cooper of Massachusetts' 26th AG Co received from Gary Quinton of Cambridge as they "policed" Charles River bank.

