President’s Message

The National Guard and Grass Roots America

Last week, we took a trip into rural Utah to visit some of our arsenaries under construction and review some family programs. We stopped in the small town of Spanish Fork, Utah. It was named for the arrival of Father Escalante, a Spanish priest, into the beautiful valley in which the town resides.

Guard and family members were meeting in the new armory, which recently was completed. The armory had been in the works for several years.

The city fathers had donated the land for the armory. They also passed a hardwork floor in the drill hall so that city recreation could use the hall for most youth programs. As customary, the state legislature had contributed 25 percent of the land cost to the construction of the facility.

The armory is home to a number of units, including an engineering company that is part of the contingency force pool of the National Guard—early deployers.

The National Guard armory is a community center. During the floods of the previous decade, the unit soldiers were major contributors to the fight to save homes and property.

In town, young men are trained in the tradition of their fathers, the Utah National Guard. Guard members have helped with flood control activities, fought floods, volunteered their own time for youth programs, assisted the Boy Scouts in the Scouting for Food Program to feed the homeless and were mobilized for Desert Storm.

The lives and armory are examples of the principled of our soldiers. From drug demand reduction programs to medical assistance, the National Guard is adding value to America. It is literally impacting on the very fabric of society. In these small towns, young men and women, through National Guard military training, learn what the republic is all about. They learn to respect the flag, for what it stands. They learn a task through the impact of the Montgomery GI Bill, they are given a chance to make themselves and improve their own lives, and the American society as a whole.

The impact that Army and Air National Guard units have on their communities is substantial. In 1995, 15th Infantry Regiment, 55th Infantry Division, all must be seen first hand to be appreciated.

The National Guard, active national since the Constitution, is one of those units that binds the nation together. It is with its states, its communities and its people that we must be seen. Our experiences and courage are small only a small fraction of what happens between Guard units and their local communities. The life of an Army Guard, for example, is more than 5,000 hours a day spent maintaining that capability.

The removal of a National Guard unit is extremely traumatic for rural America. The loss of an armory and their local communities.

The closing of an armory is not consistent with communication in the community. It is a loss of the young, eager men and women who want a chance to grow and contribute to America.

Features

The Healing of Saint Lo

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The National Guard takes on new roles and missions during the Kosovo conflict. Some support missions are being assumed by the states on the ANG. In 1995, the ANG Guard Group 1 was assigned to KC-135s, but the unit members are still part of the Air Force. During a recent training mission, the ANG KC-135s refueled the Air Force over the Grand Canyon.

Kosovo Grizzlies Go Refueling

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