Recently, we had an opportunity to address a large non-Guard audience at the national level. We were invited to write an article for the AFW Magazine, the national magazine, which is distributed to the National Guard, that is published by the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

The AFW editor suggested we write about overseas training, the Montgomery Amendment, the two lawsuits concerning overseas training and about "the National Guard today." These four topics are tightly linked. This month, it is appropriate to relate a little of what we said so that Guardsmen in the field can "take it from there" in addressing local veterans groups or other civic groups as such targets of opportunity present themselves.

To begin, it seems fair to point out to most audiences that the National Guard of 1989 is not much like the National Guard of 1960. This is not an attempt to say that Guardsmen are not as capable, or as senior enough to have served across these two decades know this full well. The "59 years of the Total Force Concept/Policy" have created a vast change in the Guard and Reserve.

Until the mid-1960s, Guard units held "meetings" one night a week for a couple hours. There were two weeks in a "summer camp" at some nearby military installation during the summer months. Parolees called this Annual Training Field Training Exercise (AFT). Today it is called simply annual training (AT). We don't go to "meetings" any more. Far more compatible than a week night drill is the MUTA-5, which begins on a Friday night and ends late Sunday. The evolution at some foreign location in the fall, winter or spring are commonplace.

The advent of the Total Force Policy — and the active components' determination beginning in 1979 to fully implement it — has created even further changes. The Air Guard was far and away the leader in this in part because the U.S. Air Force in leadership were determined to make its Guard and Reserve full partners. Thus, the Air Guard was provided better resources, made a full recipient in the procurement objectives and inegrated sooner into the Total Air Force mission. Rotations of fighters, utilization of the KC-135 refueling assets in the worldwide SAC mission and commitment of its aircraft to overseas missions proceeded from the early days. Indeed, many of us remember the tremendous contribution of the Air Guard's C-135 fleet during the Vietnam War when they made regular runs to Southeast Asia, even though those units were never mobilized.

Overseas training for the Army Guard began in 1978 with small detachments or cells deploying to Reforger. This was a breakthrough in the sense that overseas deployments for the Army Guard had been virtually unheard of before. RPOC deployment expanded rapidly so that by 1981, we had a battlegroup in the 36th Infantry Division in Germany to go back to. For 1989, the "19 years of the Total Force Concept/Policy" have created a vast change in the Guard and Reserve.

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