

The Citizen-Soldiers: An Abbreviated History of the North Dakota National Guard

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(The following article is an abbreviated history of the North Dakota National Guard and is written specifically for the Bluebook. The majority of content is edited from the book "Citizens as Soldiers: A History of the North Dakota National Guard", 1986 by Jerry Cooper. This book was chosen for its completeness of research and accurate depiction of events. Additional information on the Philippine Insurrection came from the unpublished article "For Liberation and Democracy: The North Dakota National Guard in the Philippine Insurrection" by this author. Information on the Gulf War was retrieved from the October 1990 – February 1991 issues of The Nodak Guardsman, a publication of the North Dakota Army National Guard. Material on the Balkan Actions was provided by the 129th PAD. No credit is being taken by this author for original research or text writing, and none should be inferred.)

Introduction

The history of the North Dakota National Guard is not much different from the history of the United States military in general. It is marked by lack of funds, poor equipment, build-ups and drawdowns, and skepticism by the public. Yet what makes the North Dakota National Guard different from other military units is its remarkable ability to view adversity as a challenge to overcome, and distinguish itself when duty calls.

Since North Dakota became a state in 1889, its National Guard has consistently carved its name in the monuments of U.S. military history. Even today, the North Dakota National Guard challenges itself by training in areas of the world which still suffer from military, political, or cultural conflicts.

This article presents an abbreviated history of the North Dakota National Guard. It is taken directly from the book "Citizens As Soldiers: A History of the North Dakota National Guard" by Jerry Cooper.

Origins of the North Dakota National Guard

The North Dakota National Guard originated in the Dakota Territorial Militia of the 1860s, which in turn was a descendent of the colonial militia. After 1783, and until the end of the nineteenth century, state governments provided most of the troops used to fight the nation's wars.

America's military history is a history of two armies, the Regular Army and the citizen-soldier army raised for war. Until World War I, a vast majority of the citizen-soldiers came to national military service through the state militia system as volunteers.

Regular Army posts existed in the soon-to-be Dakota Territory as early as the 1850s. Congress created the Dakota Territory in March of 1861, but due to the needs of the Civil War, the regular troops were removed from the Missouri River posts. Territorial Governor William Jayne issued a proclamation in December 1861 calling for two companies of volunteer cavalry. He managed to raise one company by January 1862 and on 29 April 1862, they were federally recognized as Company A, First Dakota Cavalry to serve for three years. Company B was formed a year later. The companies would serve with the Sibley-Sully campaigns of 1862-63, but would never be asked to leave the Territory to help with the Civil War.

In 1867, Governor A.J. Faulk would invigorate the Dakota militia by requesting arms, ammunition, and accouterments for one thousand men -- mostly cavalry -- from the Secretary of War. By the end of 1867, 538 officers and men were organized in eight companies located in the southeastern part of the Territory. Nearly \$38,000 dollars was allocated to the Territory to begin the militia, but there was no plan for sustaining the militia once the federal money was exhausted. J.L. Kelly, the appointed adjutant general had asked the governor for a small sum of money to rent an armory to store surplus military gear. This was due to the fact that little of the twenty-nine tons of arms, uniforms, and accouterments could be found, most being "lost or destroyed for want of some suitable place to store them."

During the 1870s, the Dakota Territory lay dormant. The mismanagement of arms and uniforms kept the War Department from supporting further growth in the militia. In addition, the low population density made it difficult to raise an adequate militia, and the regular army eliminated the Indian threat during the campaigns following the Little Big Horn battle in 1876. But Governor William Howard would continue to fight for a larger militia for the Dakota Territory.

By 1885, the Dakota National Guard totaled one thousand officers and men organized in a brigade of two infantry regiments and an artillery battery. "The Great Dakota Boom" from 1878 to 1890 largely influenced this growth. Railroad construction, rapid immigration into the Territory, and a

maturing agricultural economy created the recruiting base for a strong militia. In 1889, the Dakota Territory was split into North and South Dakota. North Dakota's military code authorized one infantry regiment of ten companies, expandable to twelve.

However, by 1890 the North Dakota National Guard began to suffer from a severe lack of funds. The "Great Dakota Boom" went bust. Wheat prices plummeted. Too much land speculation. Soon the Dakotas were left underpopulated and short of tax revenues.

During the 1890s, there was little money for mustering, much less for training. From 1894 to 1898, the North Dakota National Guard conducted no summer training camps. This made it very difficult for both recruiting and for preparation for any necessary actions by the Guard. This lack of funds would haunt the North Dakota National Guard right up to the Spanish-American War of 1898.

The 1st North Dakota Volunteer Infantry, 1898-1899

In 1898, events in Cuba and open hostilities toward Spain would send North Dakotans to the Philippines. The events started in 1895, when Cuban rebels launched a major revolt against Spain. The United State government attempted to negotiate a peace agreement and even offered to purchase Cuba. The Spanish resented US interference and flatly rejected the offer.

President McKinley was concerned about US interests and sent the USS Maine to Cuba. But on February 15, 1898, the USS Maine exploded in Havana harbor. The reason for the explosion remains unknown, but at the time most Americans felt it was a Spanish mine. On March 25, 1898, the Navy Board of Inquiry reported that the explosion was caused by an external source, probably a mine -- though no one was blamed for placing the mine

On April 19, 1898, Congress passed a joint resolution demanding that Cuba be set free. President McKinley sent the US Navy to blockade Cuban ports. Spain reciprocated by declaring war on the United States on April 23rd. The Spanish-American War had begun.

Even before Congress passed mobilization legislation, North Dakota's Governor Frank Briggs began receiving requests from various individuals for commissions so that they may begin recruiting regiments. Governor Briggs exercised caution and fully intended from the beginning to follow President McKinley's instructions to use the National Guard to fill the required quota of volunteers.

Originally, the War Department gave the North Dakota National Guard a quota of five troops of cavalry. North Dakota only had one mounted unit in Dunseith. State officials found themselves upset and confused, since North Dakota has nine companies of infantry in its 1st National Guard Regiment. To preserve the North Dakota political and military identity, Brigadier General Elliot S. Miller of North Dakota and others requested a change to the quota.

The War Department conceded and changed the quota to two battalions of infantry, or eight companies. The nine infantry units, along with Troop A from Dunseith, and the light artillery battalion (Battery A) from Lisbon volunteered, though the commander of the Langdon unit (Company E) later withdrew leaving eight infantry companies. One unit not included in the original nine was the Grand Forks unit (Company F), which had been disbanded by the state a year earlier for inefficiency. The eight remaining infantry companies were chosen to become the 1st North Dakota Volunteer Infantry Regiment.

Companies of the 1st North Dakota Volunteer Infantry

Company A, Bismarck

Company G, Valley City

Company B, Fargo

Company H, Jamestown

Company C, Grafton

Company I, Wahpeton

Company D, Devils Lake

Company K, Dickinson

Lieutenant Colonel William C. Treumann was selected to be the regimental commander for the 1st North Dakota Volunteers, with Major Frank White as 1st Battalion commander and Major Harry C. Flint as 2nd Battalion commander. Flint resigned four days later due to health reasons, and Captain John Fraine of Company C (Grafton) was promoted and took his place.

The War Department designated Fargo as the concentration point for mobilization and created Camp Briggs. Due to lack of funds, the North Dakota National Guard had not attended a summer camp since 1894, and their equipment was in poor service. Shortages were corrected with nonregulation items. Commanders were given five days, 26 April to 1 May, to recruit their units to strength. It took only six hours for the Grafton unit to meet its strength requirements. Just over 450 men would begin their journey to the Philippines.

The 1st North Dakota arrived at Manila Bay 31 July, but ended up spending another five days on board, since the army could not decide where to put them. On 5 August, they went ashore on the small Manila Bay peninsula of Cavite, south of Manila

On 12 August, the 1st North Dakota received orders to take twenty-four hour shifts in the trench lines surrounding the city of Manila. They were assigned to General Arthur MacArthur's 1st Brigade. A firefright and assault occurred on 13 August in which the 1st North Dakota played a modest role. It lasted one hour and resulted in the surrender of Manila. Major Frank White called it "rather disappointing." The battle over the Philippines had ended just 13 days after the 1st North Dakota Volunteers arrived at Manila.

The 1st North Dakota was now involved in occupation duty. They endured intense drill, homesickness, seasickness, bad food, and make-shift equipment. Many soldiers were ready to go home. But Major General Elwell Otis rejected requests from units asking that they be released since they had fulfilled the obligation of their enlistment contracts. General Otis was uneasy over the continued Insurgent conflicts with the American troops and wished to keep all his forces until replacements arrived. In a letter to his wife, Major White complains "It is a waste of time here with nothing to do that adds a particle to one's advancement." His men deeply disliked occupation duty.

Occupation duties strained the regiment. Increase in sick calls and relaxed attitudes began to take its toll. Majors White and Fraine began strict inspections for cleanliness and reinforced discipline among the troops. As a result, the sick calls decreased, but discipline would still be a weakness throughout the winter months.

Since the Spanish surrender in August, the Filipinos, lead by Emilio Aguinaldo, pushed for independence. This was the independence they fought the Spanish for and now asked the US government for this recognition. The US had decided that the Filipinos were not ready for self-rule. The Philippine freedom fighters began to once again grow restless of their occupiers.

From February to April, skirmishes took place amongst the trenches as shots were exchanged between the Insurgents and the American troops. Although fighting became more intense and aggressive with each encounter, General Otis was hesitant about launching a grand campaign.

In March 1899, Major General Henry Lawton took over the 1st Division. The 1st North Dakota was transferred to the 1st Brigade, 1st Division, VIII Corps now under the command of General Charles King. Not content with General Otis' caution, King encouraged those with Krag-Jorgensen rifles to snipe at the insurgents. He also sent out armed reconnaissance. King's assertiveness and proactive attitude would propel the 1st North Dakota into action.

General King planned an action near an advance outpost on a ridge (called King's Bluff) occupied by the 1st North Dakota. Major Frank White led a detachment on an attack against an Insurgent outpost just one mile beyond the regiment's lookout. Approximately 200 insurgents held the position. King ordered White to take two companies, outflank the enemy outpost, surround it, and capture the Insurgents.

Companies A (Bismarck) and D (Devil's Lake) moved up to Kings Bluff on 31 March. The companies began to march to a ravine, after which things began to go wrong. King and White misjudged the direction of the ravines course, which turned just in front of the Insurgent outpost. White initially went beyond the point where he was to make his advance toward the Insurgents, and quickly retraced his step until he reached a better advance point. However, a large clump of brush still lay between him and the Insurgent post. White maneuvered the companies into position on the enemy's right flank.

At daybreak, King's snipers fired, alerting Insurgent sentries who began firing at White. Company A had clear ground and charged. Company D was confronted with a gully with heavy brush and steep rock sides. Company D crossed in single file and reformed, only to find themselves only two hundred yards from the Insurgent camp and trenches, which were expected to be far in the rear as King assumed. Company A's charge had cleared the Insurgent outposts. Company D fired on the Insurgent camp and routed them from their trenches. The Insurgents, however, disappeared into the heavy jungle.

King was upset about the failed operation and was quick to criticize Lieutenant Colonel Treumann because one company arrived ten minutes late. White submitted a report explaining the problems of unknown terrain and inaccurate assumptions. The matter was quickly ended.

General Lawton was known for his restlessness. To put his tireless energy to good use, General Otis put him in command of a special expedition to the town of Santa Cruz, located to the east-southeast of Laguna de Bay. This was the first American advance into the Philippine countryside. Lawton's orders were to capture Santa Cruz and an Insurgent army "rumored" there and to distribute copies of McKinley's proclamation (citing that the Philippines now belong to the United States) to the Filipinos.

Lawton began to organize his forces and included Major John Fraine's 2nd Battalion of the 1st North Dakota. Lawton delegated tactical command to General King. Having learned his lesson on unknown terrain, King organized a special four-company battalion of sharpshooters to serve as

scouts. Lieutenant W. J. Gruschius of Company K (Dickinson) led the 2nd Company sharpshooters made up of forty men from the 1st North Dakota.

The expedition left on 8 April, using the waterways, since the Insurgents held the overland routes. They arrived on the 9th. The American advance began at 5:45 P.M. The darkness halted the advance and the troops slept on the firing line. The advance began again at 7:00 A.M. with little resistance. Lawton found the city empty. The Insurgents fled the trenches and went into the countryside, as was frequently the case. On 11 April, Major Fraine's battalion began searching for steam launches hidden by Insurgents. Fraine's force found and captured four steam launches and two cascoes. The 1st North Dakota infantry managed to capture the Insurgent Navy.

On 12 April, Lawton ordered Major Fraine to proceed to a small village called Paete to look for a suitable place where the expeditionary force could re-embark on the lake boats. The road to Paete ran through rough country, with thick underbrush and steep hills. It was suspected that an Insurgent band was in or near Paete. The battalion moved out with a five-man point guard two hundred yards forward and twenty sharpshooters one hundred yards behind. Due to the rough terrain, Fraine initially did not put out flank guards, but soon sent five scouts from Company C (Grafton) up the steep hill to his right, since it looked suspicious. They came across a trench three hundred yards in front of the column. Fraine ordered Lieutenant Tharalson of Company C to take the sharpshooters and outflank the trench. At that time, "a very heavy fire" commenced from the hillside and trees. After about one hour of fighting, the column advanced and arrived at Paete with no further resistance.

This fight was the single most costly combat incident for the 1st North Dakota Volunteers during their Philippine service. Of the five scouts sent up the hill by Fraine, four were killed in action. Private Thomas Sletteland, the only man not hit, defended the three dead and one wounded comrade while the Insurgents repeatedly attacked their breastwork to obtain the arms of the killed soldiers, only to be driven back by Private Sletteland. He then carried the wounded soldier to safety (he died later that day) and returned for the deceased. Four others were killed and two wounded during the fight. General Lawton later recommended Private Sletteland for the Congressional Medal of Honor, which he received. Private Sletteland was the first of the 1st North Dakota receive the Congressional Medal of Honor. Eight others would be honored in later fights.

Lawton did not have enough men to occupy Santa Cruz permanently. A cautious General Otis called Lawton's expedition back, fearing they might be cut off. Otis also wanted Lawton's force back for a pending operation by MacArthur.

Only two days after the return of the 2nd Battalion, the entire 1st North Dakota was assigned to another expedition under General Lawton. The expedition was to serve as a flank guard for MacArthur's 2nd Division during its offensive up the Manila-Dagupan railroad, leading northward from Manila. The expedition was to link up with the 2nd Division at the town of San Miguel de Mayumo.

Lawton's expedition left on 22 April. His first objective was to join the 2nd Oregon in the town of Norzagarya, twenty-five miles from Manila. The 1st North Dakota led the advance. They encountered enemy outposts after marching just six miles. Lieutenant Colonel Treumann deployed Major White's 1st Battalion as skirmishers. They met little resistance as the Insurgents ran off. However, another mile down the road, they met a larger force. The 1st Battalion formed a firing line and routed the Insurgents into the dense jungle.

The next day, Lawton would discover the inaccuracies of the Spanish maps. It took the 1st North Dakota ten and a half hours to cover four and a half miles. The next day, they were able to move only a mile and a half. The roads marked on the maps were mere trails or did not exist. They did not meet the 2nd Oregon until 26 April. What made the trip more difficult for the 1st North Dakota was that Lawton had the previous day's advance guard become the next day's rear guard, a supposed lighter duty. However, due to the difficult terrain, the North Dakotans acted as rear guard for four days, pushing carts and wagons and often replacing the animals as labor when they died of heat or exhaustion. From colonel down to private, everyone arduously labored every piece to its next destination.

Throughout the next several days as Lawton's expedition moved toward San Miguel, they would run into the occasional skirmish, but as always, the Insurgents would quickly run off. Terrain turned out to be the most formidable enemy. With the lack of good roads, General Otis was concerned about command and control. Rivers, swamps, heat, and sickness bogged down the 2nd Division. Lawton was ordered to halt at the town of Baliuag, since Otis heard rumors of a Insurgent ("phantom") army moving on Lawton's right flank. Although Lawton requested to move onward to San Miguel, noting the lack of "effective resistance." Lawton was to remain at Baliuag until 15 May.

While at Baliuag, Lawton organized a detachment of scouts -- twenty-five specially qualified men -- to serve as his eyes and ears in the uncharted regions east of a nearby swamp. He gave the command to William H. Young, a civilian from Connecticut who went to the Philippines for adventure. Young attached himself to Lawton's force when they moved out in April and usually ate with one of the North Dakota companies. Young was appointed Chief of Scouts and was told to select reliable enlisted men

for the detachment. Sixteen of the twenty-five scouts were from the 1st North Dakota. The scouts searched the countryside for food and weapons caches, burning most of what they found.

On 12 May, Lawton sent Young and his scouts to reconnoiter the area in and around the towns of San Ildefonso and San Miguel. At 5:00 A.M., Young discovered Insurgent trenches and induced the Insurgents to fire, estimating four hundred Insurgents. The fire fight lasted all day, when the Insurgents were routed out of town. This action of twenty-five men against four hundred advanced Lawton's brigade five miles. Only one scout was lost in the fight, Private Truelock of Company C (Grafton), 1st North Dakota.

On 13 May, Young's men -- reduced to eighteen -- moved on to San Miguel for reconnaissance. Young and three men from the 1st North Dakota approached an enemy trench line defending a bridge over the Calumpit River leading to San Miguel. The enemy of about three hundred men opened fire. The scouts charged the line as the Insurgents fled to San Miguel. Young was mortally wounded in this fight and died a day later. Lawton recommended eleven scouts for the Congressional Medal of Honor (six were from the 1st North Dakota of which three received it). This action moved Lawton another five miles. General Otis gave Lawton permission to advance his force to San Miguel, and move on to San Isidro, the capital and headquarters for the Insurgent leader Aguinaldo.

On 16 May, about three miles south of San Isidro, the scouts came across a swift-flowing stream about forty feet wide, with steep banks, spanned only by a wooden bridge. The Insurgents were entrenched on the other side and began shooting at the scouts and had set the bridge on fire. Realizing the importance of saving the bridge, the scouts set up a firing line on the bank. Lieutenant Thornton (the new scout commander) and two enlisted ran across the burning bridge. One of them, Corporal Thomas of Company K (Dickinson) fell through the badly burned bridge, but managed to swim to the other side to continue the fight. Thornton and the two soldiers fired into the flanks of the Insurgents while the others shot at them at point blank. The scouts then waded across and drove off the insurgents. They put out the fire and held the position until Lawton arrived. Thornton recommended the twenty-two scouts for the Congressional Medal of Honor (five North Dakotans actually received the medal).

Despite the successes of the scouts, the expedition ended a failure. MacArthur's 2nd Division was unable to meet Lawton at San Miguel due to the poor terrain, and General Otis would not allow Lawton to pursue Aguinaldo after left his capital of San Isidro. The force was never defeated, just easily routed and dispersed.

The 1st North Dakota returned to Manila in good shape. Colonel Treumann reported that the 1st North Dakota had more present for duty than when it left on the 21st of April. The division surgeon noted that the 1st North Dakota Volunteers had less sickness of any kind in proportion than any command.

General Otis decided to use the volunteers one last time before sending them home. He organized another special expedition to trap an army of insurgents in the Morong Peninsula region. The 1st North Dakota once again was on the move in its entirety. Treumann called together the veterans of Young's scouts and sent them in advance of his column. The scouts reported Insurgents fleeing into the jungle during the move to the peninsula. The expedition moved in unopposed with only meager resistance from snipers. This would end another failed expedition.

Lawton reported that bad roads and excessive heat hampered the mission. He also noted the tendency of Insurgents to pose as "amigos," as the American called them. Insurgents would change their uniforms to a white suit, hide their weapons, and wave white flags. The increase of this tactic moved the war from conventional to guerrilla tactics.

General Otis decided to occupy the town of Morong and the 1st North Dakota was lucky enough to draw this assignment. Lieutenant Colonel Treumann did not fear an attack but still set up outposts and scouting parties.

On 9 June, the scouts -- led by Private John Killian of Company H (Jamestown) -- attacked an Insurgent outpost. When "Dad" Killian was severely wounded, the other scouts put him on a makeshift stretcher and quickly headed back to Morong. The natives closely followed, forcing the scouts to stop several times to drive them back. At one point, the stretcher fell apart dumping Killian to the ground. The scouts fended off the Insurgents while they fashioned a new stretcher. One scout ran ahead to get help and met Major White whom sent a corpsman. By the time the corpsman reached Killian, he was dead

The occupation began to wear on the 1st North Dakota, as their morale and health deteriorated. . The town of Morong became known to the soldiers as "more wrong." MacArthur reported that "The severe, unremitting, and almost unexampled strain, have told upon the whole organizations to such an extent that they are now completely worn out and broken in health." In a 1 July letter to General Miller, the State Adjutant General, Colonel Treumann mentioned his growing sick list, "mostly of stomach and bowel troubles." "Most of us are near skeletons and have lost from 15 to 40 pounds." Morale began to suffer and take its toll on everyone.

Relief came on 6 July with the arrival of two battalions. The 1st North Dakota left Morong the next day. Adding insult to injury, General Otis later abandoned the Morong Peninsula, leaving it once again in Insurgent hands.

By July, the 1st North Dakota was ready to go home. They had not seen North Dakota in over a year and homesickness gave way to desperation. They spent their remaining time eating, sleeping, reading, writing, and buying local goods.

On 28 July, they boarded the SS Grant and headed for San Francisco. The Grant left on 31 July, spending several days in Japan and arrived at Oakland Bay on 29 August 1899. A parade was held for them and several North Dakota political figures were present. The 1st North Dakota was then mustered out in San Francisco and boarded the train back to North Dakota.

The Mexican Border Incident, 1916

Prior to 1916, National Guardsman had only a moral obligation to serve if a national call-up was required. But the National Defense Act of 1916 changed this, guaranteeing the Guard permanent service as a reserve for the army as well as substantial appropriations.

Two weeks after the passing of this act, a call-up was enacted by President Taft. Turmoil in Mexico came as a consequence of the overthrow of Dictator Porfirio Diaz earlier in the decade. Since 1911, conflicts grew and began to cross the US/Mexican border. For five years, Regular army troops guarded the boundary line to keep the civil war in Mexico. Relations between the US and Mexico slowly deteriorated. The climax of growing conflict came in early March 1916 when guerrilla leader Francisco “Pancho” Villa raided Columbus, New Mexico, shooting up the town and killing several Americans.

President Wilson ordered Major General Frederick Funston to organize a force to pursue Villa’s band into Mexico. General Funston found it difficult to support this mission with only his regular army, he recommended to the President that he call-up fifty thousand National Guardsman to reinforce his regulars along the border. Only Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona were called at first, but as the situation worsened, President Wilson federalized the entire National Guard and sent them to the border.

North Dakota, as were all states, was caught by surprise, since there was no prior indication that any call-up was to take place. Most of the senior officers were out of town. Colonel John Fraire began the mobilization by writing the call-up order and conducted it until Thomas Tharalson, the Adjutant General was able to return from Minneapolis. Companies were ordered to be drilling and recruiting

After a week at their respective home stations, the companies rendezvoused at Fort Lincoln, the designated point by the War Department. While at Fort Lincoln, the troops enjoyed the “hurry up and wait” routine, as well as measles. The companies assembled on 25 June for inspection and were fully mustered by 3 July and at the disposal of the federal government.

With all administrative matter resolved and the measles under control, the 1st Regiment left Fort Lincoln for the border on 22 July 1916. It took four days for North Dakota’s regiment of twelve companies, machine gun company, band, and medical detachment to travel to the border. No one knew exactly where they were going and what they would do when they got there. The 1st Regiment arrived at Mercedes, Texas, just seventy miles west of Brownsville. It was an undeveloped camp used by locals as a garbage dump. The first detail was to clean the camp and dig a drainage system, since the soil turned to gumbo when it rained.

While regular soldiers patrolled the borders, Guardsman began an intensive six-month training program. They went through vigorous drills, marches, problems, exercises, and inspections. The regiment worked on every aspect of military field service, including scouting, advance and rear guard, and the construction, attack, and defense of trenches.

During their stay in Texas, the 1st Regiment endured grueling training, but saw no action. The regiment’s third battalion did spend three weeks on border patrol, but found it as monotonous as drilling. Many complained and wanted to go back home, since they found their purpose meaningless, and many were concerned for their jobs and families back home. At last on 23 January 1917, the 1st North Dakota Infantry left Texas headed for Fort Snelling, Minnesota to be mustered-out.

World War I, 1917-1919

In January 1917, shortly after the return of the 1st North Dakota Regiment, the Germans resumed unrestricted submarine warfare, which by March, had sunk several American merchant ships. On 28 February, the Militia Bureau notified the state adjutants general. President Wilson ordered a partial mobilization in late March to protect utilities, bridges, and war-related

facilities from German sabotage. On 26 March, the 2nd Battalion, 1st North Dakota assembled at home stations. They had been home from Texas only forty days.

The call-up was quite dismal. The Mexican Border experience left distrust in the hearts of those who served in the 1st North Dakota. Company F was only able to muster three officers and nine enlisted men. In order to be eligible for federal service, the soldier must voluntarily sign a federal oath, different from the state oath. If they didn't sign the oath – they were not accepted into service. The National Defense Act of 1916 required all new enlistees and re-enlistments to take both oaths. But many of those serving in the North Dakota Guard at the time had entered the Guard prior to the act and wouldn't be required to take the oath until their next enlistment, unless done so voluntarily.

The War Department moved slowly in implementing its mobilization and training programs. The Selective Service act of 18 May 1917 allowed for draftees, but they could not be called into service until federal and state governments established local draft boards. The first draft did not take place until July 1917. The 1st Infantry, North Dakota National Guard was slated to report for training on 1 August at a yet unbuilt camp in the Southern Department.

Approximately 3,700 North Dakota men went to war as National Guardsman, with the 2,051 from the 1st Regiment, and the remainder from the newly organized 2nd Regiment.

The North Dakota regiments would be assigned to the 13th National Guard Division, and two weeks later reassigned to the 20th Division and would train in Palo Alto, California. Until then, the soldiers endured months of training at home waiting for training camps to be built.

On 19 September, the North Dakota regiments were ordered to report to Camp Greene as part of the 34th Division, in North Carolina, yet another change in orders. However, a change in the War Department's plans for western front warfare changed the manpower needs. Fewer infantry and more artillery, cavalry, and logistical troops were needed. The National Guard divisions would once again be reorganized.

The North Dakota regiments were now assigned to the 41st National Guard Division. The 2nd Regiment was broken up, to the delight of the 1st Regiment, over existing bitterness involving recruit stealing. Many of the officers in the 2nd Regiment were Spanish-American vets and were made to lead engineer, transportation, supply, and other companies – a hard pill to swallow for combat-experienced infantry officers.

All units under the American Expeditionary Force (under command of General Pershing) were given new numbers. National Guard units were assigned numbers from 101-300. It eliminated state names, which became another source of resentment of Guardsman. Four infantry regiments comprised the 41st Division, with the 1st North Dakota now renamed the 164th Infantry Regiment. The reorganization caused some problems, since now the 164 fell below manpower requirements. This was fortunate for five of the companies of the 2nd North Dakota Regiment, who were absorbed by the needs of the 164th.

The War Department changes reduced training time as well as did the need to get troops quickly into the theater. The 164 spent only nine days on the rifle range. They were moved to Long Island to embark and the 164 was the last regiment to leave on 16 November 1917. The 164 was part of the first divisions to go to France.

After a brief stop in England, the 164th Regiment was moved to France in five separate detachments. They were bound for the 41st Division camp at La Courtine. On this "cold, miserable trip" the soldiers were crammed in small cars, eating nothing but hardtack and canned meat. Some of the men took their frustrations out on innocent Frenchmen, stealing stoves, chocolate, and wine. Colonel Fraire ensured reimbursement.

The 164 took quarters in a stone barracks once occupied by Russian troops, and covered with about three inches of human filth all over the floor.

The AEF planned extensive training for all divisions. The 41st Division would not go through this training, due to AEF miscalculations on the need for replacements. The 41st Divisions would end up providing replacements for other divisions. The privates in the 164th Regiment were immediately transferred to the First Division.

The breakup of the 164th Regiment was "a demoralizing blow to everyone," Boyd Cormany recalled. The volunteer spirit died hard in the face of the brutal, anonymous Western Front. Guardsman focused their anger on the Regular Army rather than the enemy.

The 41st Division, now devoid of privates, was redesignated I Corps and operated as a replacement center, training camp, and specialty school until 26 December 1918, when it reconstituted as the 41st Division.

The 164th Regiment lost 278 men in the war. One hundred seventy-six died in battle, 62 died of wounds, and the remainder succumbed to disease. Nearly 650 men suffered battle wounds. Lieutenant Colonel Gilbert C. Grafton, a member of the North Dakota National Guard since territorial

days, died in France on 5 February 1919 “from an operation for gall stone and adhesions,” according to Frank White.

The 164th Infantry’s return home in 1919 ended a significant period in the North Dakota National Guard’s history. World War I closed the active military career of the last man to have served in the territorial National Guard, Colonel John Fraine. His contributions came later in his career, due to his ability to help the North Dakota National Guard adapt to the quick changes taking place in the National Guard as a whole. It is respectfully unfortunate that Colonel Fraine’s career ended on a disappointing low note such as the fragmentation of the 164th. However, his mark on the North Dakota National Guard still lives on, and is reflected today with the headquarters of the North Dakota National Guard located at Fraine Barracks.

World War II, 1941-1945

On 11 December 1940, Adjutant General Heber Edwards of the North Dakota National Guard received word that the 164th Infantry Regiment would enter federal service on 27 January 1941, although later moved to 10 February. Deteriorating relations with Japan and the ongoing war in Europe convinced President Roosevelt to call-up the National Guard.

The 164th was scheduled to go to Louisiana and train at Camp Claiborne. When they arrived, the camp was more a name than a place. The camp was a skeleton wish for a training site. No latrines were completed. Roads were narrow pathways between wooden frames to be used for tents. The camp was lagging behind schedule like everything else.

The 164th began its training as one of the four infantry regiments of the 34th Infantry Division. It consisted of units from North Dakota, Iowa, and Minnesota.

The training at Camp Claiborne continued into the summer. In August, the 164th was part of an extensive training exercise under combat conditions. Over 350,000 troops were divided into two teams and would fight against each other for a month or more. To prepare, the 34th (including the 164th) had gone on a surprise training exercise and performed rehearsal drills.

The 188th Field Artillery Regiment joined the 164th on active duty, putting 3,222 North Dakota Guardsman in federal service. They were sent to Fort Warren in Wyoming. Although Fort Warren was a much nicer place to be than Fort Claiborne, the locals were quite frosty toward the soldiers, and the

Guardsman never forgot that dogs and soldiers were not welcome in some parts of Cheyenne, near Fort Warren.

Camp Claiborne was finally nearing completion when on 7 December 1941, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. With nine months of training behind them, the boys of the 164th knew they were going to see combat.

The next day, the 164th would be detached from the 34th Division and sent to San Francisco. The regiment quartered at "Cow Palace," a livestock exhibition pavilion. Fear of espionage and sabotage caused the 164th to be spread throughout the western coast on patrol duties.

On 18 March, the 164th boarded the converted luxury liner *President Coolidge*. The vessel would take the 164th to Melbourne, Australia and board small ships on their way to New Caledonia. The purpose was to protect naval supply lines and prevent the island from Japanese invasion.

The 164th assumed various duties such as guarding the airfield, positioning against Japanese attack, unloading cargo vessels, and of course training exercises.

The 164th would become part of the Americal Division and would be involved in the Guadalcanal campaign and Henderson Field. The 164th landed at Guadalcanal on 13 October 1942. There was a stalemate. The Japanese could not dislodge the Marines, and the Marines lack sufficient strength to mount an offensive.

The Japanese mounted a bombing campaign on Henderson Field to rid the enemy air capability. The Americans advanced to gain insight on Japanese positions. The 164th became the first unit of the United States Army to take offensive action against the enemy in World War II. During a Japanese infantry attack, the 164th took the heaviest blow, but manage to fend off the attack.

During hours of darkness, Corporal William Clark of Grand Forks, and two companions crawled out from the line to retrieve two damaged and abandoned machine guns under heavy fire. They managed to assemble a serviceable machine gun from their parts in time to help repulse a large enemy thrust. He later received the Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary gallantry in action.

The battle at Henderson Field was a costly one to the Japanese, with an estimated seventeen hundred dead – a testimony to the 164th Infantry's proficiency with their weapons. The 164th suffered only twenty-six killed and fifty-two wounded. The Marines, who seldom recognize army soldiers

as anything but “boy scouts,” called the men of the 164th “soldiers” and they meant it.

The 164th continued with other battles and patrols through February 1943. The Japanese began a sneak evacuation of Guadalcanal, signaling the end of that campaign. The Japanese referred to the island as “the island of death.” Success came none to soon, as the 164th as a unit, was no longer combat effective.

The 164th reconstituted and moved on to Bouganville, part of the Solomon Islands. They would continue to serve with distinction there through November 1944. In late January 1945, they would arrive at Leyte, Philippine Islands.

The Japanese had left well armed troops in the northwest corner of Leyte. The 164th spend five weeks “mopping up” (in MacArthur’s words) inflicting heavy casualties. They would not, however participate in the final victory, for they would be moved to another area and put in reserve. They would continue with other battles through the remainder of the war.

The 188th Artillery Regiment was no different from the 164th. They arrived at Fort Lewis, Washington on 15 December 1941. They conducted training duties there.

In February 1943, artillery regiments were restructured. The 188th Artillery Regiment became the 188th Field Artillery Group, the 1st battalion became the 188th Field Artillery Battalion, and the 2nd battalion became the 957 Battalion.

In mid-April 1943, the 188th Group left for desert training in the Mojave desert in California. They remained there through mid-August. They moved to Camp Gruber near Muskogee, Oklahoma, where they would prepare for overseas movement. Once prepared they moved out to New York City where on 5 December 1943, they sailed for Great Britain. From then till June 1944, they spent most of their time training.

On 11 June, the 188th and 957th were headed for Utah beach. The battalions served throughout the war as VII Corps artillery and worked with nearly every division. They rarely operated under the 188th Group.

The 188th would be immediately attached to the 82nd Airborne and the 957th to the 9th Infantry Division. The battalions would continue supporting the offensives throughout the remainder of the war, meeting once at the famous Remagen bridgehead in March 1945.

The battalions deserve recognition for their continuous support in the European combat zone. They fired a total of 162,000 rounds at the enemy and all met their combat assignments with skill.

The Korean War and the Berlin Airlift

In July 1950, President Truman wished to contain communism and was afraid of a continued spill-over in Asia and Europe. The Army initiated a partial call to arms, and ordered a limited National Guard mobilization for September.

The 231st Engineer Battalion was North Dakota's first unit called. They had a month to prepare and transfer to active duty. The 164th Infantry and 188th Artillery received their call next. All three spent their active duty in the continental United States as training units, although many North Dakotans were transferred to other units.

The Air National Guard was the last North Dakota unit activated. War first touched the Air National Guard when the Air Force requisitioned eight of its F-52 fighters, but it did not call the 178th Squadron into service until April 1951. After a month of duty at Hector Field in Fargo, the squadron moved to Moody Air Force Base in Georgia. They stayed at Moody until mid-October 1951, and was moved to George Air Force Base in California. Once there, the pilots were selected individually to serve in Korea, and other bases in the U.S. and Europe.

Over twenty-six hundred North Dakota Guardsman served during the Korean War. Approximately 800 went overseas, and sixteen died in combat.

In the fall of 1961, President Kennedy directed a partial National Guard and Army Reserve mobilization as part of his response to the Berlin Crisis. Soviet threats to turn control of Berlin over to the East Germans, followed by construction of the Berlin Wall heightened Soviet-American tensions.

First alerted in late August, North Dakota Guardsman were slated for active duty in October. The 818th Engineer Company of Bottineau went active on 1 October and was stationed at Fort Lewis. The 164th Engineer Battalion and accompanying separate companies served at Fort Riley, Kansas. They returned home in August 1962 after ten months on active duty.

Major General Heber L. Edwards died two months after the return of the troops, on 18 October 1962. He had served continuously since his enlistment in 1915, and as adjutant general for the last twenty-five years,

the longest tenure in the Guard's history. Under his supervision, the service had more than doubled in size, acquired new armories and the Hector field complex, modernized Camp Grafton, and gained independence as an engineer organization. Although not a perfect man, his achievements far outweighed his liabilities; and when Heber Edwards died, another significant chapter in North Dakota National Guard history ended.

The Gulf War, 1990-1991

Another crisis ensued in August 1990. Iraqi President Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait and claimed it as part of Iraq. On 22 August 1990, President Bush orders federal mobilization of 200,000 National Guard and Army Reserve units to support a coalition for Operation Desert Shield. The first objective would be to prevent further advances by Iraqi troops. The second objective would fall under Operation Desert Storm, when the Iraqis would be removed from Kuwait and forced to fall back to Iraq.

Adjutant General Macdonald received alert notifications on 24 August 1990. The 136th Quartermaster Battalion, the 131st, 133rd, and 134th Quartermaster Detachments, and the 132nd Quartermaster Company were alerted immediately. They provided water services such as supply, distribution, and purification. The 191st Military Police company was put on alert 26 November 1990, and the 818th Medical Battalion on alert 17 November. The 191st would provide support for security and POW processing. The 818th would provide command and control for medical companies assigned to it.

Operation Desert Storm began on 16 January 1991, and the major offensive ended 100 hours later. The North Dakota Guardsman remained while the drawdown of troops took place.

Operation Joint Guardian, 1996-2000

The 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

On Thanksgiving night 1996, the 18 members of the 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment of the North Dakota and South Dakota National Guard received notification that they were to be deployed to Bosnia.

The first NATO forces entered Bosnia in 1995 to restore peace to what was formerly part of Yugoslavia. Ethnic conflicts among Serbs, Croats, and Muslims had erupted into the worst fighting in Europe since World War II. The Dayton Peace Accord called for a republic to be established with all three ethnic groups represented. The agreement further directed that refugees would be allowed to return to their previously owned property and

that suspected war criminals would be arrested and held accountable if convicted.

After NATO's Implementation Force (IFOR) restored order and repatriation efforts began, service support units were mobilized. The second phase of peacekeeping could now begin under the direction of the Stabilization force (SFOR). At this time the 129th MPAD became a part of the SFOR. Their mission in Bosnia primarily was to support "The Talon," a weekly publication with articles and photos and provide video/audio support to Armed Forces Radio and Television publicizing SFOR's peacekeeping efforts.

In the fall of 1996, eight members of the 116th Public Affairs Detachment were stationed in Bismarck, ND. The 129th is headquartered in Rapid City, SD, with 10 members. The two units merged, becoming the 1-129th. After mobilization, the new unit, simply designated the 129th MPAD, assembled at Camp Rapid, Rapid City, SD, on January 4, 1997 under the command of Capt. Steve Krebs. The unit arrived in Frankfurt, Germany, via "direct deployment" on January 12th. After orientation, the unit was bussed "into the box." The unit was divided into four teams: a headquarters element in Tuzla with four journalists, two journalists in Slavonski Brod (across the border in Croatia), three journalists at Camp Colt, and four journalists at Camp Bedrock. They replaced the 100th MPAD, Texas Army National Guard.

Soldiers produced public information from these bases at the rate of two articles from each print journalist and one video broadcast each week until being relieved on August 7th, 1997. The units redeployed to their home stations on August 22 1997.

HSC Detachment & Company B, 142nd Engineer Combat Battalion

The continuation of ethnic conflict in the Balkans caused by the breakup of the Republic of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s drew NATO forces into the small State of Kosovo in 1999. Located in the southernmost part of Yugoslavia and adjacent to Albania, Kosovo has an ethnic Albanian majority with a Serbian minority. Ethnic tension between the two groups brought on a crackdown by Serbian authority which claimed the Kosovo Province. In the spring of 1999, NATO peacekeepers moved into the area setting up bases of operation. Their primary mission is to help Albanian and Serbian refugees return to their homes and restore stability.

Based in Wahpeton, ND, the Company B, 142 Engineer Combat Battalion received the mobilization alert in October of 1999. On January 8, 2000, 149 of the company's soldiers left Fargo, ND for Fort Benning, GA and eventually deployed to Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo. They joined seven of

their members already deployed as an advance party. The unit's equipment was railed to Norfolk, VA and then to Greece. From their, soldiers drove and hauled the equipment to their base.

Company B's mission in Kosovo was to enhance living conditions at Camp Bondsteel by constructing wooden barracks with plumbing and electricity and to construct roads and bridges in the area. Other humanitarian projects involved rebuilding war-damaged buildings. Company B returned to the United States in August 2000.

Operation Nobel Eagle/Enduring Freedom, 2001-Present

Currently being researched.

In all, North Dakota Guardsman participated in nine calls to federal service.

“In every instance the Guard has served with honor and distinction. They are truly part-time professionals.”

Major General Alexander P. Macdonald
Former Adjutant General
(The Nodak Guardsman, January 1991)