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**U.S. FORWARD PRESENCE:
ARMY NATIONAL GUARD ENGINEER
TRAINING IN CENTRAL AMERICA**

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**U.S. Forward Presence:
Army National Guard Engineer
Training in Central America**

by

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Abstract

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The Army National Guard has conducted training exercises in Central America since the early 1970s. The operations consist primarily of engineer-oriented projects and medical readiness training exercises that treat host country nationals. Engineer projects include: road-building, renovation of schools and medical clinics, and well-drilling. This research paper examines Army National Guard engineer activities in Central America, pointing out the importance of National Guard overseas deployment training as operations consistent with U.S. national strategy. It examines the history of Guard deployments to Central America that have led to present exercises. It discusses training challenges the Guard has faced and continues to face as it proves its relevance in the Total Army scheme. Since the National Guard is controlled by the governors of each state and territory in peacetime, Guard leaders have interesting opportunities to work with state officials in deciding where the Guard should train. Moreover, operating in a foreign country under austere conditions enhances the Guard's ability to adapt and to perform under difficult conditions. Equally important, it provides Guard soldiers the opportunity to be valuable contributors to U.S. National Security Strategy by promoting democracy abroad and sustaining U.S. security with military forces that are ready to fight.

Introduction

The end of the Cold War altered America's military focus of the past half century. No longer is the United States focused on deterring communist expansionism. The President's National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement "elaborates a national security strategy tailored for this new era." Its goals are: 1) To sustain our security with military forces that are ready to fight; 2) To bolster America's economic revitalization; and 3) To promote democracy abroad.¹ These broad goals shape the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff 1995 National Military Strategy. This strategy endorses the concepts of overseas presence and power projection. Through short-term deployments of the National Guard, the United States can maintain overseas presence without permanently stationing forces abroad.

Over the years, the roles of the National Guard have changed to meet the national interest, as well as interests of the states and territories. The continuing drawdown of the military force structure places increased reliance on the National Guard, resulting in increased need to provide realistic training to enhance readiness. Overseas deployment training is one method of augmenting the Army Guard's capability to plan, mobilize, and conduct operations in a foreign environment. Although the Guard has been involved in humanitarian support in Central America for several years, it is still an effective training ground for future operations.

This research paper examines Army National Guard (ARNG) engineer activities in Central America — particularly in Panama — to highlight the importance of National Guard overseas deployment training as an operation consistent with U.S. national strategy. To better understand Guard involvement in Central America, this paper will explain the history of Guard deployments to Central America that have led to present exercises. It discusses training challenges the Guard

has faced and continues to face as it proves its relevance in the Total Army scheme. Since the National Guard is controlled by the governors of each state and territory in peacetime, Guard leaders have interesting opportunities to work with state officials concerning where the Guard should train. Moreover, operating in a foreign country under austere conditions enhances the Guard's ability to adapt and to perform under difficult conditions. Most importantly, it provides soldiers the opportunity to be valuable contributors to U.S. humanitarian efforts while training on wartime missions.

Army Guard Past to Present

A review of National Guard history sets the stage and gives the basis for a full appreciation of current operational trends. History clearly reveals past failures and enables the U.S. to improve its military strategy.

The National Guard traces its origin to the Massachusetts Bay Colony, where America's first militia regiments organized in 1636. Since that time, the Guard has participated in every U.S. conflict from the Pequot War of 1637 to Operation Desert Storm in 1991.² The debate over the roles and missions of the National Guard date back to the late 1700s, when many colonists did not want a large standing army. They wanted to rely on the state militias for defense of the nation.

Civil War

When the Civil War began in 1861, militia men from both the North and South quickly joined the small standing armies of the North and South. The first volunteers were enlisted for 90 days, but after the War's first battle at Bull Run, "President Lincoln called for 400,000 volunteers to serve for three years." Many of the most famous Civil War Battle streamers are carried by

units of the Army National Guard. The Guard units in the South carry battle honors with the parenthetical notation "Confederate service."³

Spanish-American War

In 1898, when the United States declared war on Spain, the President did not have the authority to send National Guard units outside the United States. Guard units had to volunteer as individuals. Through this process, 165,000 soldiers from every state entered federal military service. As the war spread to the Pacific, three quarters of the first U.S. troops to fight in the Philippines were Guard soldiers.⁴

Dick Act of 1903

Legislation was enacted to strengthen the National Guard's position in national defense. The 1903 Dick Act⁵ was passed, replacing the Militia Act of 1792. The new law provided a significant increase in federal funding to the Guard, but units had to reach minimum strength levels and be inspected by Regular Army officers. In addition, the President could specify the period of service to be served by the militia inside or outside the territory of the United States. In 1912, the U.S. Attorney General nullified this provision, ruling that the President could not employ the militia outside of the United States.⁶

National Defense Act of 1916

The passage of the National Defense Act of 1916⁷ increased the Guard's role in America's national defense by designating the state militias as the Army's primary reserve force. In order to qualify for this primary reserve status, National Guard units would have to be organized in accordance with Army regulations and become federally recognized. The legislation also prescribed that the War Department set qualifications for Guard officers, that states could not

deactivate units without presidential approval, and that Guardsmen take an oath to the United States as well as to their state.

While the National Defense Act was being passed in 1916, the renegade Mexican bandit Poncho Villa was raiding the Southwest border towns. President Woodrow Wilson called the National Guard to active duty. Before long, 158,000 Guardsmen were in position along the Mexican border. The Guardsmen saw no action. However, the following year the United States declared war on Germany, which led to yet another activation of Guard members.

World War I

National Guard units played a significant role in World War I. Its divisions accounted for 40 percent of the American Expeditionary Force's combat strength. Three of the first five U.S. Army divisions to enter combat in World War I were from the National Guard.⁸ Despite the Guard's distinguished war record, the Regular Army remained suspicious of the National Guard's state ties.

World War II

In 1939, prior to the beginning of World War II, the U.S. Army consisted of 187,000 regulars, about 200,000 National Guardsmen, and approximately 120,000 Army Reserve members. At that time, the Army theoretically had twelve divisions, but only three were formally organized. The National Guard had 18 divisions plus the resources for four additional divisions, and the Army Reserve listed 27 divisions that existed only on paper.⁹

After the fall of France to the Germans in June 1940, Congress authorized the full mobilization of the National Guard. Guard units were then poorly trained, so they experienced unusually high attrition rates between July 1940 and June 1941.¹⁰ Many of the new replacements

and officers were untrained. This prompted the Army to substitute regulars for virtually all National Guard officers above the rank of lieutenant colonel and for a very high percentage of those in the lower officer ranks.¹¹

Korean Conflict to Vietnam

When General Douglas MacArthur called for additional forces to counter the Communist invasion in Korea, eight Army National Guard divisions were activated. Once again, it was some time before these poorly trained units would be ready for combat. The large number of untrained soldiers is attributed to the Selective Service Act of 1948, which allowed young men to enlist directly in the National Guard without receiving any active-duty training.¹²

It appears that the military did not learn anything from the Korean experience. When U.S.-Soviet tension heightened over the 1961 Berlin situation and President Kennedy ordered a partial mobilization of the reserves, the units were again not combat ready. Then during Vietnam, President Johnson made the fateful political decision not to mobilize National Guard units until the Viet Cong Tet offensive struck in 1968.¹³ But Guard units lacked authorized equipment and personnel; consequently they did not achieve combat readiness for some seven months after mobilization. President Johnson was fearful that activating the reserves would provoke major Communist powers to enter the conflict. On the other hand, President Kennedy used the reserves as a deterrent during the Berlin crisis.

Following Vietnam

As the Vietnam War and the draft came to an end in 1973, a tremendous period of change occurred in the National Guard's mission with adoption of the Total Force Policy. This policy treated all military organizations — active and reserve — as a single integrated national defense

force. It gave the Guard more missions, modern equipment, and training opportunities around the world. In 1977, the first ARNG unit trained overseas for its two-week annual training period. The results of the Total Force Policy were borne out during the Persian Gulf War, when more than 60,000 ARNG combat-ready soldiers were mobilized.

The National Guard continues to change as the military draws down its force structure. Defense planners are working to come up with the right force mix to meet the national military strategy, while maintaining the Guard's capability to meet state contingency missions.

Federal/State Relationship

The Guard's state responsibilities distinguish it from the active component and reserves. Guard soldiers' status is dramatized by the fact that they take an oath to their state constitution and to the United States Constitution. Since federal and state control of the Guard can sometimes be confusing, it is not unusual for tensions to develop between Guard leaders and Regular Army commanders. In recent years, the most notable dispute concerned Guard units training outside the United States.

Yet, this conflict is not new. In 1812, the militias of Ohio and New York refused to enter into Canada.¹⁴ Vermont's troops were recalled by their governor when the British mounted an attack on the East Coast and burned the national capital.¹⁵ During the Mexican War, governors were reluctant to authorize their units to cross into Mexico.

In 1952, Congress enacted the Armed Forces Reserve Act.¹⁶ It authorized the Secretary of Defense to order Guard units to active duty for overseas training for not more than 15 days per

year. This law does not require the individual soldier's consent, but the governors must consent to overseas deployments of their Guard units.

In 1985, some governors took exception to having their troops deployed for training to Central America. The governors believed that President Ronald Reagan was using these missions to present a show of U.S. military force in order to challenge the Sandinista government in Nicaragua and to prepare a staging area in Honduras for a U.S. supported "Contra" rebel invasion of neighboring Nicaragua.¹⁷ Less than half of the governors at the time approved training in Honduras. To counter these reluctant officials, Mississippi Representative G. V. "Sonny" Montgomery sponsored an amendment to the 1987 Defense Authorization Act (the Montgomery Amendment). It essentially took away the governors' authority over National Guard active duty training. Minnesota Governor Rudy Perpich challenged the Montgomery Amendment in the federal courts — in *Perpich v. U.S. Department of Defense*.

The governor challenged "whether the Congress may authorize the president to order members of the National Guard to active duty for purposes of training outside the United States during peacetime without either the consent of a state governor or the declaration of a national emergency."¹⁸ The federal attorneys countered that it is insupportable to give 54 officials of the state and territorial National Guards a de facto voice in foreign policy.¹⁹ The U.S. Supreme Court ruled unanimously against the states. The Montgomery Amendment does not prohibit governors from withholding their Guard units from training overseas; however, governors risk the loss of federal funds if they do not approve overseas training missions.

But in recent years governors have not raised an issue over National Guard participation in overseas deployment training. Since the federal government controls the purse strings of the

state National Guards, governors are reluctant to oppose Guard training on foreign soil for fear of jeopardizing funding. Loss of federal dollars could result in reductions of Guard structure within states, which could negatively affect their ability to respond to natural disasters and civil disorders.

Nationally, the defense organization is on the downswing to a smaller military force. As a result, competition for the remaining resources is keen. So governors must weight their decisions carefully. The bottom line is "that federal statutes give the President authority to reduce the funding of any unit that does not comply with federal National Guard operations, even when it is in state militia status."²⁰

The overall reduction in Army strength means the Army must find ways to effectively use its existing assets. No longer does the Army have the means to maintain a large forward deployed force on foreign territory. Many of its overseas units have returned to the Continental United States (CONUS); or others have been deactivated. Through the creative use of the National Guard, the United States can maintain its forward presence, while permanently stationing fewer forces abroad.

U.S. Forward Presence

America's military focus has shifted to contend with the changes brought about by the end of the Cold War. Although the Cold War era is over, U.S. interests around the world remain virtually unchanged. President Clinton's National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement emphasizes worldwide engagement and the enlargement of the community of market democracies.²¹

The National Military Strategy of the United States states that forward presence "take the form of permanently stationed forces [overseas] and forces temporarily deployed [overseas], some on a regular, rotational basis." In addition, the U.S. maintains an overseas presence through a broad program of routine air, ground and naval deployments, as well as various contingency operations.²² These activities provide several benefits, one being that U.S. forces overseas provide visible proof of U.S. commitment to defend American interests worldwide — along with those of its allies and friends.²³

Instability exists throughout the world still, so forward-based forces remain an essential foundation to regional and world stability. The new strategic environment calls for shifting to a strategy of cooperative engagement with reduced numbers of forward stationed forces, with flexible deployment patterns, and with use of U.S. capabilities deployed overseas to participate in forward presence operations that demonstrate America's leadership in the world.²⁴

Since the end of the Cold War, the Army has experienced dramatic reductions in its force structure. In 1989, the Army's strength was 770,000; by 1995 it had fallen to 510,000 soldiers. It is scheduled to level at 495,000 by the end of 1996 and out to 2001.²⁵ The Army National Guard is experiencing the same downsizing. In 1989, the Guard maintained 450,000 troops, by 1995 it was down to 387,000. It will flatten out at 367,000 between 1996 and 2001.²⁶

Despite force structure reductions, overseas commitments remain vital to U.S. interests. As the nature of U.S. forward presence operations changes, smaller temporarily deployed forces will take on increasing importance. Joint or single service units will participate in small unit training, personnel exchanges, security assistance, seminars and conferences, medical support,

humanitarian assistance, engineering assistance, disaster relief preparedness, and intelligence exchanges.²⁷ These types of operations improve access and cooperation abroad, but they require only a small investment in resources.

Global Missions

Army National Guard units are deployed throughout the world on various missions. As of February 1996, one-third of all Army Guard troops stationed overseas have been supporting Operation Joint Endeavor — peacekeeping/peace enforcing activities in Bosnia. Other on-going missions include small unit training in Pacific Command (PACOM), military-to-military contact in the Baltic states, and medical support and engineering assistance in Southern Command's (SOUTHCOM) area of responsibility.

In January 1995, the first tri-component unit composed of 400 Army Guard soldiers from 24 states deployed to the Sinai as part of the 82nd Airborne Division's 4th Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment. The light infantry task force was activated for six months of duty as part of the Multi-National Force and Observers (MFO) Sinai mission.²⁸ During Operation Uphold Democracy, more than 700 Guardsmen provided numerous support functions for active component units.²⁹

In recent years — since Desert Storm — the Army's increased reliance on the National Guard has become more apparent. With the decrease in active troops, the Army cannot support its many missions without the Guard. Engineering exercises in Central America are well-suited for Army Guard engineer units.

Army Guard Engineers in Central America

Army National Guard deployments to Central America began with exercises conducted by the Florida and Puerto Rico National Guard in the early 1970s. However, 1984 marked the beginning of an almost continuous series of Guard participation in Joint Chiefs of Staff-approved engineer road-building and medical readiness training exercises in Central America. Since that year, more than 120,000 Army National Guard soldiers have trained in Latin America.³⁰ The engineer-oriented exercises have been creatively designated — Minuteman, Blazing Trails, and now Fuertes Caminos (Strong Roads in Spanish). The name Fuertes Caminos (FC) is carried over each year to the next exercise. Annually, more soldiers deploy in support of Fuertes Caminos than to all other theaters combined.³¹

Guard supported humanitarian and civic action projects on this exercise range from construction or repair of schools, medical clinics, and latrines to work on roads and bridges. In addition, there are other projects, such as drilling new wells or rehabilitating old ones, installing culverts, and water and sewer systems, as well as constructing a landing strip and fire station. Concurrent with these activities, medical readiness training exercises (MEDRETE) are conducted; medical personnel provide much needed health care and veterinarian services to remote villages.

The host country, the State Department, United States Southern Command, and the National Guard Bureau agree upon and develop suitable projects for National Guard units. The National Guard Bureau designates states to take the lead for planning, mobilizing, and conducting operations in various areas throughout Central America. During fiscal year 1995, Joint Task Force Mule, lead by the Missouri National Guard, deployed in Western Panama; the California Guard took charge of Team 579 in the Honduran Department of Yoro; South Carolina ran Team

Palmetto, which deployed northwest of Belize City; and Louisiana's Team 225 deployed in the Chiriqui Province of Panama.³² California's Task Force Eureka is the lead element for Fuertes Caminos '96 in Boca del Toro province, Panama. These participating states form the core headquarters and maintain the continuity between each 17-day rotation of Guard units during the four to six-month exercises.

Training Challenges

Serious questions about the National Guard's ability to mobilize and to perform its mission had been raised long before the Persian Gulf War. Previously, Guard units have been activated despite their lack of trained personnel. But with increased emphasis on realistic training, the Guard is continually looking for opportunities to provide better training for its soldiers. Engineer-oriented exercises in Central America have provided a partial means for enhancing readiness levels.

Training in foreign countries provide Guardsmen with learning experiences different from those in the United States. The training requires the Guard to plan for mobilization, to conduct operations, and to redeploy to home station. This peacetime training gives soldiers, units, and command elements experience in operational areas that will be called upon during the next contingency mission.

Soldiers strengthen their technical skills by working on various engineer projects. Their critics cry, "Why can't the soldiers get the same training in the U.S.?" It is difficult to replicate a training environment such as Panama in the United States. Laws and city building codes preclude construction of military type combat trails, bridges, and buildings. Some Americans are under the

misconception that the U.S. military is building super highways, bridges, and buildings. In reality, these projects would not meet acceptable standards in U.S. communities. Furthermore, there is no substitute for working in a foreign country under austere conditions, where the people speak a different language and where soldiers must adapt to different building conditions and materials. This type of training makes the soldiers realize that the National Guard is serious business, not just some "weekend warrior" pastime. Following this training, they expect to be called the next time the nation needs the National Guard.

If there is a disadvantage to engineer-oriented missions, it would be the lack of tactical training. To compensate for this shortfall, tactical training is implemented during other annual training periods, during which units must still meet Army training standards. Despite this drawback, significant benefits are derived from "preparing and executing plans to move people and equipment to remote and austere overseas locations. Situations such as adverse weather, time delays, equipment failures, and communication breakdowns can be dealt with and resolved in the course of the training in a non-crisis atmosphere."³³

Fuertes Caminos '93

In 1993, the South Dakota National Guard formed and led Task Force Rushmore. The task force was part of SOUTHCOM's on-going Fuertes Caminos exercises in Latin America. These exercises enable the United States to demonstrate forward presence while developing stronger relations with its southern neighbors. They also improve the economic well-being of the region by building roads that provide access to fertile agricultural areas. Moreover, the projects

are planned to respond to the host nation's needs and to be sustainable as an addition to the country's infrastructure.

Task Force Rushmore's planning began in 1990, after the Chief of the National Guard Bureau appointed the South Dakota Guard as the lead organization for the road-building exercise in Panama's western Chiriqui province. TF Rushmore included 5,923 active, National Guard, and reserve troops from 50 states and one territory. The mission was to improve 27.1 kilometers of farm-to-market road, to completely renovate 16 schools and six medical clinics, to drill 18 fresh water wells, and to conduct four MEDRETEs.³⁴ The five phase operation — pre-deployment, deployment, execution, redeployment, and recovery — proved to be a challenging learning experience. Each unit rotation, to include the duration cell, completed each phase.

Working with the active, reserve, and other services, enabled the Guard leadership to expand its knowledge of the realities of joint operations. Many Guard soldiers had previously served only with the National Guard structure. Through the series of events leading up to and executing the mission, the group broadened their perspective of military operations.

Phase I — Pre-deployment

Formation of the adhoc task force staff began one year prior to the start of FC-93. The task force's administrative, operational, logistical, and support personnel were the nucleus for the duration of the exercise. Planners of such operations must seek and obtain competent individuals with appropriate experience to fill staff positions. This can be difficult. Staff jobs generally require personnel with specific talents. The best qualified people usually have civilian careers; they have trouble in taking a leave of absence for an extended period. Nonetheless, recruitment of key personnel is crucial to the successful operation of the task force.

The staff is responsible for planning and coordinating with upper echelons for resources — personnel, equipment, materiel, and facilities. Additionally, logisticians develop plans for deploying equipment and personnel, while engineers develop construction plans for the base camp, farm-to-market road, schools, clinics, bridges, and wells. The quality of the entire operation depends in large part on the teamwork and efficiency of the staff.

During the pre-deployment phase, units participating in FC receive an accurate assessment of their mobilization planning and capability to execute the plan. Furthermore, unit commanders are given a realistic evaluation of their mobilization preparation. This engineer operation provides an environment where shortfalls can be dealt with creatively without significant impact on the success of the mission. In Phase I, troops are processed for overseas deployment using the same procedures and standards employed during the Gulf War, Haiti, and most recently in support of operations in Bosnia.

Phase II — Deployment

As part of Phase I planning, equipment from National Guard and Reserve units was identified for deployment to Panama. In Phase II, this equipment was transported to Port Hueneme, Calif., for shipment to Port of Gulfito, Costa Rica. From Costa Rica, the nearly 600 pieces of equipment were driven 68 miles in convoys to a temporary staging area at Vulcan, Panama. This movement of construction and support equipment required considerable logistical planning and coordination with several U.S. and foreign governmental agencies.

Personnel deployed from two locations — Ellsworth Air Force Base, S.D., and Buckley Air National Guard Base, Colo. — aboard either government contracted commercial airlines or military airlift. Upon arrival at Howard Air Base, Panama, troops were transported to David via

military airlift, then further transported to the base camp at Plaza de Caisan by CH-47 Chinook helicopter or by commercial bus. The total time from in-processing at the aerial port of embarkation to arrival at the base camp took between 14 to 18 hours.

This lengthy and complicated personnel movement process required the duration staff to provide accurate scheduling and resourcing. For troops who had never deployed overseas, this was an experience that prepares them mentally for future contingency missions. Such experience will no longer be foreign to them. They will know what to expect and will be prepared if mobilized for federal service.

Phase III — Execution

The primary mission of the task force was to convert a treacherous, steep winding mountain road in western Panama into a usable route. The 27.1 kilometer dirt road extends from Plaza de Caisan to San Andres. Prior to construction, the road was principally a dirt and rock trail. The most formidable challenge of the road project was to remove 350,000 cubic yards of earth from the hill the natives call Codo del Diablo, "elbow of the devil." The name was derived from the dangerously steep switchback on the original road. The engineers cut a new passage through Diablo by terracing the slopes, which lowered the elevation by 100 feet.

Along the road, new bridges replaced unsafe and dilapidated structures. Surplus Bailey bridges placed on concrete abutments were used as replacements. This mission presented the engineer bridge crewmen with a real-world task. Normally, these crewmen practice bridging over small manmade gaps, where a miscalculation is of little or no consequence. Bridging in Panama raised soldier training to a higher level of readiness — a level comparable to that needed in Bosnia.

While the road and bridges were being built, schools and medical clinics along the route

were modernized. New roof trusses, roofs, doors, electric lights, and fans were added, as well as new bathrooms and septic tanks. The vertical construction engineers encountered unfamiliar building materials that tested their construction skills. For example, building materials were not uniform — concrete blocks, roof trusses, and tin roofing. This presented real challenges for soldiers who are accustomed to quality construction products. They had to adjust to the inconsistencies in size and shape. After some instruction from local Panamanian craftsmen, the soldiers learned how to proceed with the vertical projects more quickly.

As in the past, there was some controversy over the suitability of the projects and the ability of the country to maintain the completed projects. A Government Accounting Office audit of the Department of Defense's Humanitarian and Civic Assistance Program has found that some DoD projects were not designed to contribute to foreign policy objectives, that some did not appear to enhance U.S. military training, and that some either lacked the support of the country or completed projects that were not used.³⁵

TF Rushmore met with none of these criticisms. The Panamanian government pledged to surface the road with gravel, which had begun prior to the TF redeployment. Upon completion of the schools and clinics, the local villagers held grand opening celebrations and immediately began using the structures. The entire project provided a positive experience for both the Panamanians and U.S. troops.

Phase IV — Redeployment

After each unit rotation completed its mission, it was redeployed to the U.S., using the deployment plan in reverse order. As one unit departed for the United States, another unit arrived, continuing the project where the last unit left off.

Following the last unit rotation, equipment and duration personnel moved in phases by convoys 350 miles to Fort Espinar — located at the Atlantic side of the Panama Canal Zone. At the Fort, equipment was cleaned and inspected by the Department of Agriculture, then loaded onto the ship at the nearby Port of Cristobal. This process precisely replicates procedures required during redeployment from contingency operations.

Phase V — Recovery

During the final phase of the operation, all equipment was returned to its parent unit, and funds were transferred to units to cover equipment repair costs. Selected duration personnel remained on orders until all TF administrative actions were finalized and the after-action review conducted.

Training Costs

The total costs associated with training in Central America are difficult to ascertain. This is because (1) DoD does not maintain transportation costs for ARNG training separately from those expended for active Army and other reserve forces, and (2) the Air National Guard does not maintain separate cost information by location of the exercise.³⁶

Since the majority of National Guard and reserve members are in an annual training status, pay and allowance expenditures are irrelevant. These costs are incurred regardless of where they train. During fiscal years 1983-87, the training cost for the ARNG totaled about \$22 million for incremental pay and allowances, real estate leasing, repair parts, administration, and some transportation costs within the United States.

Inasmuch as the exercises are Joint Chiefs of Staff-approved, transportation costs are funded from appropriations set up specifically for the exercises. SOUTHCOM provides funding

for in-country incremental costs, such as logistical support.³⁷

National Security Implications

Before the collapse of the former Soviet Union, Guard exercises in Central America had an indirect effect of countering Cuban/Soviet expansion in the region.³⁸ Since the end of the Cold War, no foreign military power can project significant force into Latin America to threaten the United States. However, U.S. security interests in Latin America are still being redefined in view of the post-Cold War era.

Since U.S. security interests in the Central American region are not overwhelming, we can now focus more on promoting prosperity and democracy. Road-building and other construction projects in Central America seem insignificant in the overall national security strategy.³⁹ In reality, they are the stepping stones for promoting security, prosperity, and democracy. The U.S. military influences U.S.-Latin American policy through civic action and "nation-building" programs. The ARNG exercises demonstrate U.S. support for friendly governments such as Honduras.⁴⁰ The farm-to-market roads that the Guard has built enable farmers located in remote, rugged terrain to transport their crops to market quicker and easier than before. Improvements in a country's infrastructure and quality of life also builds stability. Promoting stability through regional cooperation and constructive interaction is one of the two national military objectives addressed in the 1995 National Military Strategy document. Finally, these projects can be viewed as humanitarian assistance programs, programs that Secretary of State Warren Christopher has acknowledged "will always be part of our foreign policy because they reflect our values. Our

commitment to democracy and human rights...is consistent with and reinforces our national interests."⁴¹

Conclusion

Army National Guard engineer units have made important contributions to humanitarian efforts in Central America. The engineer projects help sharpen soldiers' technical skills and provide military leaders with opportunities to plan, mobilize, conduct operations, then to redeploy to the United States. Operating in a foreign country under austere conditions enhances the Guard's ability to adapt and to perform under difficult conditions. Situations such as time delays, equipment failures, adverse weather conditions, and a myriad of other unpredictable events can be dealt with in a non-threatening environment. Leaders and soldiers learn from these situations, enabling them to be better prepared to overcome future adversity. Aside from the obvious benefits of overseas deployment training, troops complete the mission with (1) a greater appreciation for people of different cultures; (2) a sense of accomplishment; (3) higher morale and enthusiasm; and (4) an increased level of readiness. This type of experience cannot be duplicated within the United States.

Since force reductions throughout the military are reality and since the active forces must rely on the reserve component; using Army National Guard engineers for nation-assistance projects while serving as America's forward presence provides a winning situation for the U.S. and its southern neighbors. Additionally, the non-combat use of Army Guard engineers supports the U.S. strategy of overseas presence and power projection through peacetime engagement. These Guard activities provide the ways and means for supporting the nation's national security interests in Central America.

Endnotes

1. The White House, A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, February 1995, i.
2. Renee Hylton, Citizen Soldiers: An Illustrated History of the Army National Guard, 1994, 3.
3. *Ibid.*, 13.
4. Wright and Hylton-Greene, A Brief History of the Militia and the National Guard, 23.
5. 32 Stat. 775.
6. 29 Opin. of the Attorney General 322 (1912).
7. 39 Stat. 166.
8. Renee Hylton, Citizen Soldiers, 17.
9. Martin Binkin and William W. Kaufmann, U.S. Army Guard & Reserve: Rhetoric, Realities, Risks (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1989), 38.
10. About 96,000 Guardsmen (roughly 40 percent of the Guard's June 1940 strength) were discharged for a variety of reasons. More than 50,000 men in the lowest three grades were allowed to quit if they had dependents, close to 5,000 were underage, about 3,700 had physical disabilities, over 4,400 held jobs considered critical to the economy, and roughly 5,300 had changed their residency. *Ibid.*, 39.
11. *Ibid.*, 40.
12. Guard divisions mobilized in 1950 with personnel military occupational specialty (MOS) qualifications at 27 to 46 percent. Many of the youngest Guardsmen had no active duty experience except for two weeks of annual training. *Ibid.*, 42.
13. Renee Hylton, Citizen Soldiers, 25.
14. Samuel J. Newland, "The National Guard: State versus the National Control," Public Administration Review 49, (January/February 1988): 73 (note 27).
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23. The White House, A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, February 1995, 9.
24. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Report on the Roles, Missions, and Functions of the Armed Forces of the United States, The Pentagon, February 1993, III-32.
25. DA manpower statistics, Information Paper, date unknown.
26. NGB manpower statistics, Weekly Update, date unknown.
27. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Report on the Roles, Missions, and Functions, III-34.
28. The unit comprised 72.2 percent Guard, 20.3 percent active, and 7.5 percent Reserve soldiers. Guard soldiers occupied more than 45 percent of the unit's key leadership positions. See Army National Guard Posture Statement - Fiscal Year 1996, Washington, D.C., 2.
29. In 1994, the Army National Guard executed 12,588 operational support missions, transported 57,322 passengers, lifted 124,237 pounds of cargo, and flew over 26,000 flying hours, at a cost of \$16.1 million. See Ibid., 3.
30. National Guard Bureau, NGB-ARO-OY Information Paper, "Overview of ARNG Involvement in USSOUTHCOM," 28 August 1995.
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32. Ibid.
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