

Phone calls upset spouses of 212th

NORTH LITTLE ROCK — Spouses of soldiers stationed at Fort Hood, Texas, with the Arkansas National Guard's 212th Signal Battalion have received telephone calls urging them to buy insurance and burial plots while there's still time.

Maj. Cissy Lashbrook, spokesman for the National Guard, said today that callers tell the wives that their husbands are scheduled to go to Saudi Arabia and imply that the soldiers may not return.

"Some of them were very upset," she said of the spouses. "You might want to let the public know that they might not want to do business with the people who are doing this."

There are no plans to send the 212th to the Middle East at this time, but "There's always the possibility," Lashbrook said.

The unit will finish a training phase at Fort Hood on March 1, but they are not scheduled to return home then, she said.

"They may move around the U.S. in different areas," after

that, Lashbrook said.

Guard officials have given no indication how long the unit will be mobilized, she added.

Approximately 150 members of the 212th's Co. B are based in Benton. That unit, as well as other companies of the 212th, left for Fort Hood on Jan. 27.

A send-off sponsored by the Benton Chamber of Commerce drew an estimated 3,000-5,000 persons.

Other companies of the 212th are based in North Little Rock,

Hot Springs, Pine Bluff and Danville. The 720-member battalion specializes in field telephone communications using state-of-the-art Mobile Subscriber Equipment.

It was placed on alert for possible mobilization Dec. 28. The unit had previously been placed on alert Aug. 24, but was removed from that status on Sept. 29 for undisclosed reasons.

The address for members of the 212th is: 212th Signal Battalion, Fort Hood, TX 76544.

Iraqi officers seek shelter in schools

DHAHRAN, Saudi Arabia (AP) — The relentless attack by U.S. and allied war-planes has forced top Iraqi officers to seek protection in schools, U.S. military officials said today.

In the last 24 hours, the officials said, the U.S. Air Force knocked out 25 Iraqi tanks moving in enemy territory and lost one UH-1 helicopter.

Persian Gulf

said, "in all probability, yes." But he said he was not concerned.

The general also said he

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by Philip Felton
The Hor-

Mobilization Order Could Come Any Time

Danville Guard Unit Placed On Alert Status

Danville National Guard Unit, Detachment 1, Company A, a unit of the 212th Signal Battalion, which is headquartered at Fisher Army in North Little Rock, was notified last Friday afternoon, August 24th, that it had been placed on federal alert. They were the first reserve unit in the state to join the U.S. effort in the Persian Gulf crisis.

Maj. General James Ryan, adjutant of the Arkansas National Guard, who made the announcement last Friday, flew via helicopter to Danville Sunday morning and visited the Danville Guard unit where he made an inspection of the 63-member unit as Guardsmen were busy readying for a possible mobilization order which Gen. Ryan said "could come at any time" from the Department of the Army.

In an interview by the Record on Sunday morning, Gen. Ryan said once a mobilization order is handed down, Danville Guardsmen would have a set time frame to report for duty at the armory. He indicated the battalion (besides Danville) includes Guard units at North Little Rock, Benton, Hot Springs and Pine Bluff. All units would be told the actual departure date and where the duty station is located if the mobilization order comes.

Once a mobilization order is given, the Battalion has a fixed number of days to report to their mobilization station, which for the 212th has been with the 3rd Signal Brigade, Fort Hood, Texas.

Battalion units had been scheduled for regular drills this weekend, prior to being put on alert status, and spent Saturday and Sunday preparing for the mobilization order. Tight security was imposed at the Danville armory during this past weekend and visitors were required to sign in and wear "visitor" identification cards while at the armory.

As part of the security agreement made between battalion headquarters and news media, National Guard officials agreed to let reporters talk with any of the Guardsmen but asked that no names be used in any of the news articles or photos.

Hi-Tech Communications Equipment

Gen. Ryan said Sunday, this battalion, "has the state-of-the-art communications equipment as far as the Army is concerned and is as high-tech as the civilian world has too—this makes them a high-priority unit and the amount of money this system has cost is considered."

"There's only three units in the Army with this sophisticated 'military telephone equipment' which we describe much like a cellular telephone system. Two of these three units are active Army units. This unit has switchboard operators, mechanics, standard operators and other support personnel to set up field communications effectively anywhere in the world. Because of the type of unit involved here, he expects the battalion to be called up in the first wave," he concluded.

Guardsmen Prepare For Order

Danville Guard personnel, which includes nine women, spent Saturday received immunization shots to ward off a variety of diseases, met with a lawyer and prepared wills and discussed other legal matters as well as working through financial details.

One Guardsman said, "We are going through our mobilization procedures this weekend to make sure each Guardsman has everything they need in case we are mobilized—to assist the families—to make sure they have all of their papers in order, that they have all of their shots. We want to make sure they have all of their fatigues, boots, socks—everything down to the last detail."

General Ryan indicated that President Bush had the authorization to activate the unit for 90 days and he can extend that time for another 90 days. "This is the first time this battalion has been federally activated. Before it has only been used in state emergencies."

A battalion spokesman said a family assistance center would be opened at the Danville armory for two weeks if the unit is mobilized (see related article).

Spirits, Morale Is High

Although most Danville Guardsmen were surprised at the federal activation alert order, members related that they were ready to do a job for the Army if called to active duty. On a personal level, many members had unfinished business at home or at work they needed to work out during the next few days to prepare for an actual mobilization order.

Except for a small full-time staff of Guard personnel at each of the armories and at battalion headquarters, the 650 members of 212th Signal Battalion are in the Guard on a part-time basis and hold civilian jobs.

If mobilized, it is not certain whether the communications battalion will replace an active Army unit stateside or be sent for possible duty in the Middle East. And, not knowing even if mobilization will come or not, leaves a mood of disruption and uncertainty in the lives of some of the Guardsmen, especially those who would leave wives, husbands and children behind.

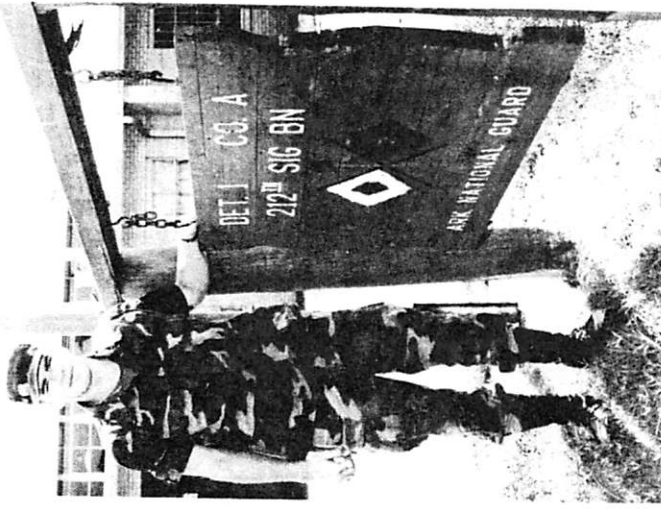
However, those interviewed on Sunday in Danville were in good spirits and smiling—accepting their responsibility with pride—some admitted they never really thought such a mobilization order would be this close to reality.

Eisenhower Mobilized Unit In 1957

Danville Unit Called In LR School Crisis

The only time the Danville National Guard was actually federally mobilized was in 1957 during the Little Rock school integration crisis. The unit was first mobilized by then Governor Orval Faubus who used state Guard members to prevent blacks from entering Central High in Little Rock.

But, on September 24, 1957, President Eisenhower federally mobilized the State National Guard and ordered the guard to be placed in security positions around Central High to permit blacks to enter the



Danville Guard members were notified by the U.S. Army to stand by in a state of alert last Friday for possible mobilization to active duty during the middle east crisis. This Guard member has been in the Guard less than one year and stands by the Company A sign at the Danville Armory during a drill exercise on Sunday. (Record photo by Dan Havner).



THE YELL COUNTY
Record

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Local roundup

Auto break-ins reported

OSCEOLA — Two vehicle break-ins are keeping busy in Osceola. The first break-in occurred in the parking lot of the Memorial Hospital and was reported at 10:30 yesterday. The owner of the vehicle, Faber, said that an equalizer and three car speakers were removed. Total value of the items is \$1,200. The equalizer was recovered by police and two speakers are being sought. The second break-in was reported to police at 4:15 a.m. yesterday. Bennie Harrington of Lexa, had at an Osceola motel for the night. He discovered this morning the back glass of his vehicle was broken, but couldn't find anything missing.

Store robbed of cash

OSCEOLA — Coleman's Combo, 625 W. Main, was robbed at 2:15 a.m. this morning by a black male, approximately 30 years old, 5-foot-10 and 130 pounds, entered the store and purchased several small items. He then pushed the cashier from the front of the cash drawer, grabbed the cash and ran out of the store. A suspect was not present or implied, police said.

Four-wheeler stolen

PROMISED LAND — Sheriff's deputies are investigating the theft of a second all-terrain vehicle this week. The four-wheeler was reported stolen by Carl Lucy of Promised Land and is believed to have been stolen between 12:30 p.m. and noon Wednesday. The 1989 beige vehicle was equipped with a gunrack and a wench. Estimated value is \$4,800.

Fire at McDonald's safe

OSCEOLA — Firefighters responded to a report of a fire at McDonald's restaurant, 801 W. Keiser, at 10:30 p.m. Wednesday. A vat of grease had boiled over, prompting the call. No fire occurred and firefighters were on the scene for 10 minutes.

Man escapes to report fire

OSCEOLA — In Monday's issue of the Courier News, it was incorrectly stated that Lorine Greene was not home at the time a fire broke out at her home. She was home and a grandchild was home with her, but escaped to report the fire.

Homecoming sets kickoff

General tells of U.S. strategy

By DEB COOPER
CN Associate Editor

BLYTHERVILLE — Maj. Gen. Jack Ryan, adjutant general of the Arkansas National Guard, shared with members of the Kiwanis Club his insight into the role some Arkansas citizen soldiers are now playing in the Middle East.

The general said it was important to understand what part the military is presently playing in the Persian Gulf region and what "we might be called to do."

"Right now it looks like some 430,000 Iraqi troops have been moved near the Saudi border," he said. "The heaviest concentration is 10 miles just inside

the Iraqi border but the troops are still in offensive positions, but it would be very easy for them to take a defensive posture."

Ryan said the Iraqis were equipped with primarily Soviet and French made equipment. "They have Soviet AK-47 assault rifles, some MiG 23 aircraft and French-built Mirage aircraft. The Iraqi army uses British (war) tactics and have also been influenced by Soviet tactics," said the general.

He felt confident about the strength of American military muscle in the area. "The Iraqis just finished an eight year war with Iran so they are very experienced but our people are much better trained and that should offset the experience factor."

Some members of the 189th Tactical Air Group based at Ft. Smith have an idea of what they may face if confronted by some of the aircraft used by the Iraqis.

"Our F-16s flew against some French Mirages during Maple Flag exercises held this summer in Canada. These guys say the Mirage is beatable," said the general.

Presently, the U.S. has forces numbering somewhere around 150,000 in the region. The general said the U.S. is not alone in this effort and many smaller countries have supplied troops there.

"I was surprised to find that some of the small countries like Bangladesh, Bahrain, Pakistan and Oman had troops there," he said. "I wouldn't be surprised to see Soviet troops there too."

Ryan said that no one nation "was interested in a protracted situation" and also said that he did not foresee Saddam Hussein "ready to do anything serious in nature."

He did express a concern about the recently imposed air embargo. "This does offer an opportunity for armed conflict but it is a way to keep the pressure on Iraq but it may cause problems and right now we just want to keep the pressure on."

Members of National Guard units and Reservists are part of that pressure. "Nationwide some 22,000 members have been called to active duty and by November we expect that to increase to 40,000. It looks to be a sustained operation," said Ryan.

There are several Arkansas units already in the Gulf region including the 1127th Transportation Co. from Monticello and the 212th Signal Battalion from North Little Rock has been alerted but not called to duty.

"Six firefighters from Fort Smith were called to active duty and are now stationed here at the base (Eaker). They replaced active duty people who are now in the Gulf," he said.

The general said the support for the U.S. effort in the Middle East has been tremendous. "We asked for volunteers and in two hours had received calls from 500 people. The support from employers and communities has been great. It makes us feel good," he said.



Cooper

A GENERAL MEETING — Maj. Gen. Jack Ryan, adjutant general of the Arkansas National Guard, meets a member of the Kiwanis Club following a presentation at a breakfast at

the Holiday Inn. The general gave an overview of the U.S. military presence in the Persian Gulf region.

Guard is ready, but wait is hard

By Toya Hill
Gazette Staff

When you're geared to wing off in defense of your country, waiting isn't easy.

"The only thing that's bad is not knowing what's going to happen next," a 19-year-old female member of the Arkansas National Guard's 212th Signal Battalion said Friday. "You can't start anything new."

Both she and her father are part of the battalion, which was placed on alert two weeks ago, but still hasn't been activated. Both could be sent to the Persian Gulf.

They are members of the Benton unit of the 212th and were on hand for a briefing that the National Guard gave Gov. Bill Clinton Friday morning at Fisher Armory in North Little Rock. The Guard isn't letting its members give their names for security reasons.

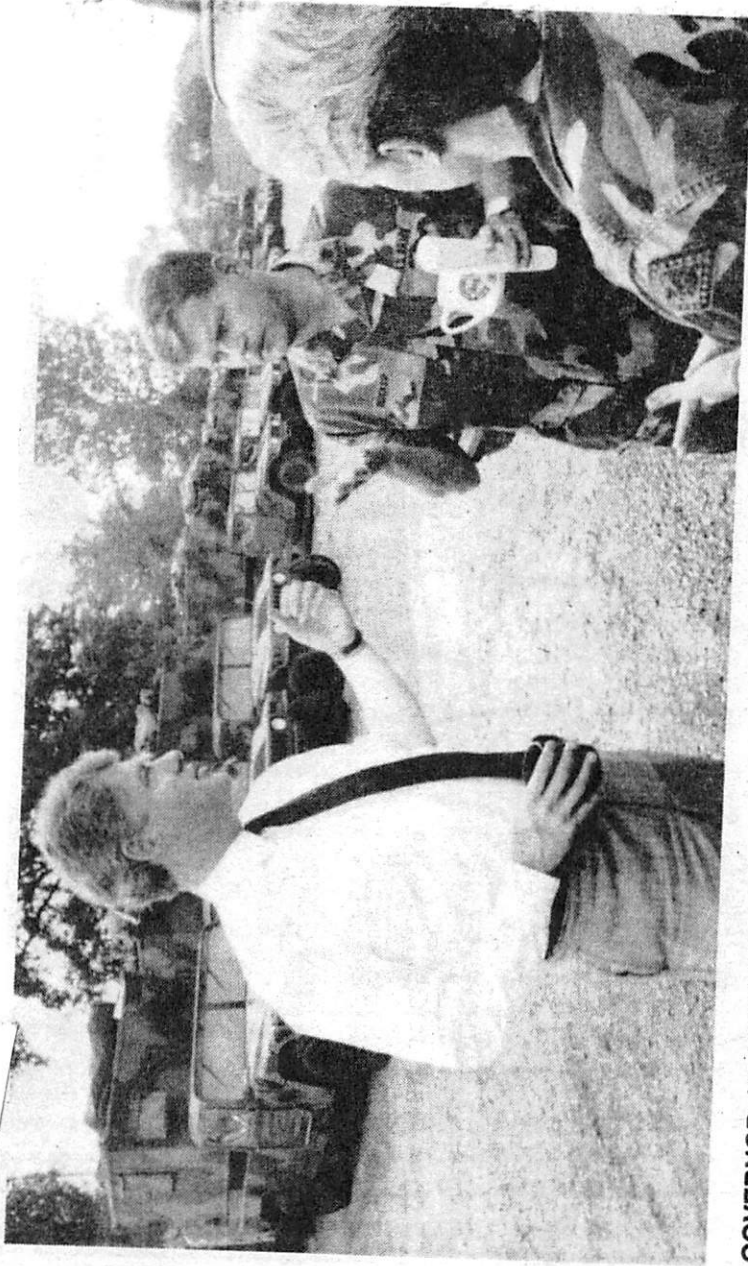
The woman's father said he doesn't particularly care for the fact that his daughter might be involved in a war, but knows she will do well.

"Ever since the beginning, each generation has stood up for what's right," he said referring to his family. "She's next."

But when the order comes, everyone in the unit will be ready, officials told the governor.

The battalion, which runs a sophisticated communication system, was put on alert Aug. 24 for possible mobilization. It is made up of about 650 members from units in North Little Rock, Hot Springs, Danville, Benton, and Pine Bluff. They are currently awaiting mobilization orders to Fort Hood, Texas, with the 3rd Signal Brigade.

Lt. Col. Steve Rucker, commander of the 212th, told



GOVERNOR AND GUARD: Gov. Bill Clinton talks with Lt. Col. Steve Rucker at the Fisher National

Guard Army Friday in North Little Rock. Rucker is the commander of the 212th Signal Battalion.

Clinton that the unit's system is capable of handling about 1,716 users in a 2,100-square mile area.

"It's nothing more than a telephone system on the battlefield," he said. The system also can be worked into a local phone system in the event of an emergency here at home such as the earthquake that is predicted for eastern Arkansas, he said.

After the briefing, Clinton, accompanied by Maj. Gen. James Ryan, adjutant general of the Arkansas Guard, took the opportunity to shake hands and

mingled with guardsmen, thanking them for answering the call.

"Everyone I've spoken with has been willing to do it," he said. "I have been very impressed with the attitude."

One thing about this crisis is that "it really demonstrates how important it is to have a well-prepared National Guard," Clinton said, adding that he supports the president's decisions thus far.

Steve Keesee/Gazette Staff

Guard telephone battalion awaits call, briefs Clinton

BY KEVIN WALKER
Democrat Staff Writer

Gov. Bill Clinton was "briefed" Friday by members of the 212th Signal Battalion of the Arkansas National Guard, who are at the Fisher Armory in North Little Rock this weekend preparing for the possibility of war in the Persian Gulf.

Clinton spoke with about 30 of the battalion's 650 members, who have been on alert since Aug. 24. It is the only Arkansas National Guard unit on alert status.

He found reserve soldiers nervous about the prospect of war but ready — vocally so — to do what they have been trained for if called up.

"I'm in the military, but that doesn't exactly mean I'm for war. I want to see us try to settle this by peaceful means. But if we can't, I just want us to go in there and kick some ass," said one 22-year-old female soldier from Jacksonville.

Soldiers interviewed were told not to give their names to reporters.

"Nobody wants to go," said Lt. Col. Steve Rucker, battalion commander. "But we're quietly confident we can do the job."

The 212th is one of only three battalions trained to deploy a tactical communications system in the battlefield.

Clinton said he was interested in the capabilities of the battalion both overseas and in Arkansas.

"I want to know how this battalion can help us in case of an earthquake. This kind of network could be especially useful," Clinton said.

Dr. Iben Browning, a New Mexico climatologist, has predicted a Dec. 3 earthquake on the New Madrid Fault, which runs through southeastern Missouri and northeastern Arkansas.

Clinton reiterated support for President Bush's decision to deploy the military in the Persian Gulf, saying Ameri-



Arkansas Democrat/John Sykes Jr.

BRIEFING — Gov. Bill Clinton talks to Lt. Col. Steve Rucker at Fisher Armory in North Little Rock on the state of readiness of the Arkansas National Guard in case the unit gets called up to help in the Persian Gulf.

cans agree with Bush's policy so far.

"The question now is what price are we willing to pay to get Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait, and can we do it without bloodshed," Clinton said. "We shouldn't be judging him (Bush), we should be honestly examining our position."

"It's going to keep a lot of people on pins and needles," Clinton said.

In the 10-minute "briefing" portion of Clinton's visit, Rucker explained how the battalion sets up a communications system.

He said the battalion's \$10 million worth of equipment makes them the "eighth largest phone company in Arkansas."

"We can move into a site and have you talking to somebody in less than an hour," Rucker said.

Inside the main hall of the armory, which was already stifling hot at 8 a.m., soldiers loaded equipment into trucks. In a nearby room, soldiers cleaned weapons.

Rucker said the majority of the battalion is from Central Arkansas. While on alert status, all members must remain

in a location that would allow them to reach the armory within 24 hours.

"It is a tough situation. What I've told my family is not to cancel any plans just because I'm waiting for the call," Rucker said.

If called up, the 212th would be deployed with the 3rd Signal Brigade in Ft. Hood, Texas. The two units have trained together so "it won't be a meet and greet situation on the battlefield," Rucker said.

The 212th unit also has a father and daughter in it, both of whom said Friday they are comforted that they would have each other nearby if they went to the Persian Gulf.

While he would have to leave a wife and two other daughters behind, the 40-year-old father said, "I guess it's better that I'll be there with her. We're in this together."

The 19-year-old daughter said while on the whole she likes having her dad around, things sometimes get a little sticky.

"He sometimes has to forget I'm his daughter, and sometimes that's hard for him," she said.

140 put on alert as 10 reservists leave

BY SANDY DAVIS
Democrat Jacksonville Bureau

Ten Navy reservists from Little Rock boarded airplanes Tuesday destined for active duty in Virginia, and another 140 Army National Guardsmen in Monticello (Drew County) were placed on alert.

"This is what we've been training for," said Lt. Cmdr. Jim Serna, commander of the Naval Reserve Center in Little Rock.

The Navy reservists are assigned to the Navy Weapons Station, Yorktown, Detachment C309. They will remain stateside during their 90 days of active duty, Serna said.

"They'll be filling in for an active unit that went to the Persian Gulf," he said. "They'll be loading ships in Virginia."

He said the detachment was notified Friday that it would be shipping out Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Maj. Gen. James A. Ryan, adjutant general of the Arkansas National Guard, announced Tuesday afternoon the 1122nd Transportation Company at Monticello had been placed on alert.

"We don't know whether they will be activated or not," he said. "We would expect mobilization orders to follow, depending upon the political developments in the Persian Gulf."

If mobilized, the company would first go to Fort Sill, Okla., where it would receive further orders, he said.

"They might be needed as support in the Persian Gulf or they might be needed to fill in for a unit here in the States. We just don't know," he said.

Ryan described the 1122nd as a "surface transportation company" equipped with 2½-ton, 5-ton and semi-trailer trucks to transport people and equipment.

The 140 members of the 1122nd joined 650 members of the 212th Signal Battalion in North Little Rock who were placed on alert Aug. 24.

Ryan said members of the 212th, who operate a high-tech communications system, were "anxious" because two weeks have passed with no word on whether they will be activated.

"This kind of leaves them in a state of limbo," Ryan said. "They're not sure of what's going to happen next."

He said guardsmen on alert can leave the state for personal trips but should be able to return within 48 hours if called to duty.

Ryan indicated he believes the 212th will be activated if the political situation doesn't change in Kuwait and Iraq.

"I think part of it is waiting for transportation and deter-



Arkansas Democrat/Robert Poole

UPDATE — Maj. Gen. James A. Ryan, adjutant general of the Arkansas National Guard, on Tuesday briefs reporters about the latest guardsmen to be put on alert.

mining whether they're needed over there or in the States," Ryan said.

"Getting the alert order, we assume the mobilization order will follow. The thing we don't know is when."

Members of the 1122nd will

prepare for mobilization at a regularly scheduled drill this weekend.

"They'll be doing things that prepare them in the event they're mobilized, like getting physicals or immunizations," Ryan said.

The National Guard Bureau notified Arkansas officials late Monday of the 1122nd's alert, Ryan said, noting the Guard had not had a chance to notify all the company's members.

The 1122nd is "13.5 percent women and 67 percent minority," Ryan said.

For the most part, Guard members have been able to continue with their normal lives while waiting on word of activation, Ryan said.

However, he said some guardsmen were afraid to enroll in college for fear that if they were called up, they would lose their tuition.

"We asked the governor for help," Ryan said. "They went to state colleges and requested that tuition be refunded if we notified them that an individual had been actually mobilized and was gone."

"All of the state colleges have agreed to do that," he said. "But we've had no response from the private colleges. We have no idea whether they're going to honor the same thing or not. We hope they do."