



photos by Barbara Crane



*Pictured at top left is Sgt. Richard Togiak from Togiak who is communicating by radio with his patrol leader during a recent field training exercise at Camp Carroll. Shown above is Sgt. Gary Paul of Kipnuk who is guarding the trail to his patrol's headquarters. More pictures, page fourteen.*

## Guardsmen complete new course

by Barbara Crane  
Tundra Times reporter

**CAMP CARROLL** — Camouflaged in white and thrown into their positions on a snowy, wooded hillside, the soldiers were impossible to detect until one of them moved.

"Halt!" the sentry commanded, holding the visitors in his rifle's sights until they could be identified.

These soldiers, from seven Alaskan villages, were students at the Alaska

Army National Guard's NCO Academy.

They were working to earn the distinction and honor of being part of the very first graduating class of the Alaska Guard's new Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course, Phase II (BNCOC II).

This new course is designed to train infantry squad leaders in the skills they need to lead, train and direct soldiers under their command.

Beginning in October 1991, completion of BNCOC II will be one of the requirements for promotion to the rank of staff sergeant.

The men enrolled in this two-week course were recommended by their first sergeants or unit commanders, and they arrived at the Academy ready to learn.

"I came here to further my education and get more information to pass

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# • Course offers leadership training

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on to the other troops when I get back home," said Sgt. Ronald Friday of Hooper Bay.

Sgt. Jason Nowpakahok of Gambell worked especially hard on developing his leadership skills during the BNCOC II course.

"I've always had to force myself to be a leader," he said, "but with training it's coming more naturally now."

Nowpakahok thought the course's field training exercise was the hardest part.

"It was three days and two nights outside, and we had at most about three hours of sleep the whole time," he said.

"I was real cold, too, but we made it. The instructors gave us a lot of motivation, and I never felt like giving up."

For Staff Sgt. Herman Ayagarak of Chevak, the indoor classroom part of the course was the most difficult.

"Classroom tests were the hardest part for me," he said. "It's a whole lot easier for me to actually do something myself with my own hands than by just thinking about it."

Before coming to the Academy, Ayagarak had expected the course would be demanding, but he was pleased to discover that it could be fun, too.

"The teamwork — all of us working together — was great," he said. "We all became friends the first day we got there."

Ayagarak said the students did all

they could to help anyone having problems. After long days of learning many new things, instead of falling asleep they stayed up and quizzed each other until everyone knew the right answers.

"The people who didn't pass something the first time, we worked to make sure they would get through the course," Ayagarak said. "We didn't get much sleep and everybody was tired, but we stayed friends and helped each other all through the course."

Three of the students were honored with special awards during the Dec. 20 BNCOC II graduation ceremony.

Sgt. Jason Nowpakahok of Gambell was named the Distinguished Honor Graduate and Sgt. Howard Kingeekuk of Savoonga was selected the Honor Graduate. The entire class voted to give the Leadership Award to Sgt. Harberg Paul of Kipnuk.

Other members of this first BNCOC II graduating class were:

Staff Sgt. Christopher Alexie, Staff Sgt. Fred Fox, Sgt. Thomas Mesak and Sgt. Gary Paul from Kipnuk; Staff Sgt. Herman Ayagarak from Chevak; and Staff Sgt. Donald Evon and Staff Sgt. Patrick Spein from Kwethluk.

Also Staff Sgt. David Green, Sgt. Ronald Friday and Staff Sgt. Camille Bell from Hooper Bay; and Staff Sgt. Henry Kanulie, Sgt. Carl Evon, Sgt. Walter Kuku, Sgt. Oscar Tukaya, Staff Sgt. Henry Bavilla, Staff Sgt. John Sharp, Sgt. Carl Smith and Sgt. Richard Togiak from Togiak.



Shown at top is Sgt. Ronald P. Friday from Hooper Bay who makes his hourly radio check with headquarters. Moving down, clockwise, is Staff Sgt. John Sharp from Twin Hills who is taking a break during the exercise. At bottom left is Sgt. Donald Evon from Kwethluk who discusses his patrol's mission with Staff Sgt. Henry Kanulie, from Togiak, center, and Command Sgt. Maj. Dennis Metrokin, commandant of the NCO Academy. Middle left, are Staff Sgt. Christopher Alexie, left, and Staff Sgt. Fred Fox, both from Kipnuk, standing guard.



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