

Red Tape Hurts National Guard

Sen. Ted Stevens says Army red tape is hamstringing efforts of the Alaska National Guard Scout Battalions.

At issue, the senator said recently, are 196 snowmobiles requested by the Guard — and denied by the Army — since 1969.

The vehicles are required for Scout Battalion missions in remote areas of Alaska, areas in which snowmobiles are the only functional vehicles for supply, medical evacuation, reconnaissance and other missions, Stevens said.

"In spite of the well-documented, long-standing requirement for these most important vehicles, their procurement and supply to the Alaska National Guard Scout Battalions appears to be hung up by jargon such as type classification, equipment authorization and policies criterias — in essence, red tape," Stevens said.

The senator made his protest in a wire to Army Secretary Howard H. Callaway, Chief of Staff Gen. Greighton W. Abrams and Lt. Gen. E.H. Almquist, Abrams' assistant for force development.

Stevens asked the Army officials to personally look into the five-year delay in authorizing purchase of the snowmobiles.

The senator's wire also offered to accompany the three officials "to Alaskan outposts in the dead of our severe winter season so you can better appreciate the requirement."