



Photo by Barbara Crane

*Sgt. 1st Class Pius Hoelscher of Hooper Bay, right, receives his Alaska Distinguished Service Medal from Maj. Gen. John Schaeffer. Hoelscher is retiring from the Alaska Army National Guard after 39 years.*

## Guard honors Hoelscher for devotion to duty

by Barbara Crane  
for the Tundra Times

BETHEL — Not many people can claim more years of military service in Alaska than Sgt. 1st Class Pius Hoelscher of Hooper Bay.

As a young man in 1942, Hoelscher enlisted in the Alaska Territorial Guard and was a member until the ATG disbanded in 1947.

In 1950 he joined the newly organized 2nd Scout Battalion of the Army National Guard.

Over the years Hoelscher, a bilingual Yupik, passed on to younger Guard members his knowledge of the survival skills and patrolling techniques unique to the 2nd Battalion's vast Yukon-Kuskokwim area.

Now, after 39 years in positions of increasing responsibility with the Army National Guard, Hoelscher is planning to retire in July.

To recognize his contributions to his unit, Hoelscher was honored in a Feb. 12 awards ceremony in Bethel, the 2nd Battalion's headquarters.

Maj. Gen. John Schaeffer, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, congratulated Hoelscher and presented him with the Alaska Distinguished Service Medal.

The citation which accompanied his medal praised Hoelscher for his devotion to duty.

"Sgt. 1st Class Hoelscher has established himself as a cornerstone of his unit," it reads. "His greatest attribute is his untiring effort to improve training and the quality of life for soldiers within his company."