

National Guard enlists 1,000th recruit

by Steve Pilkington

for the Tundra Times

When Nancy Healy, 25, of Wasilla decided to follow in her mother's and sister's footsteps and join the Alaska Air National Guard, she had no idea what she was getting into.

Healy, who was sworn in last week by Maj. Gen. John Schaeffer, was the 1,000th person to enlist in Alaska's "best kept secret," said Col. Ken Taylor, who leads the Guard's recruiting efforts.

Healy heard that she was the 1,000th recruit several days after enlisting and did not expect that her enlistment would be so noticed.

"I thought I could just sneak in," she said after being sworn in while television cameras looked on.

In spite of the fact that she has more relatives in the Guard than most people, Healy said she was not pressured to enlist at all, not even



Nancy Healy was sworn in by Maj. Gen. John Schaeffer, photo by Steve Pilkington

by her husband Dan, who has been in the Guard for 15 years and works full-time at Kulis National Guard Base.

"He wouldn't even give me a glimpse of his real attitude on it," Healy said last week. "But he's all grins now."

"Project 1000," which was begun in May, had the goal of reaching the 1,000 enlistment mark by the end of September. Instead, that goal was reached a month ahead of schedule.

"Sometimes, to do these things, you need a goal, and 1,000 seemed like a nice round number," said Taylor.

Alaska's Guard has the highest number of women enlisted nationwide, said Lisa Dean, a recruiter with the Guard.

Dean, who is the Guard's number one recruiter averaging about 10 enlistments a month — the national average is only about two — feels that the benefits of the Guard's programs are the reason for Project 1000's success.

Healy will soon begin a six-week basic training and will enter the Guard working in construction and supply.