



photo by Barbara Crane

*Col. Joseph P. Beans, left, stands at attention next to Lt. Col. Stephen D. Korenek, incoming commander of the 1st Battalion.*

## Korenek takes command of 1st Scout Battalion

by Barbara Crane  
Tundra Times reporter

NOME — The 1st Scout Battalion, Alaska Army National Guard, has a new commander.

Lt. Col. Stephen D. Korenek accepted command of more than 300 men and women of the 1st Battalion in a July 14 change of command ceremony at the battalion's headquarters in Nome.

Lt. Col. Fred Haynes, commander since July 1987, passed the battalion's flag to Korenek, symbolizing the change of command.

"I want to thank my staff and all the officers and troops for supporting me in everything that had to be done," Haynes said in his farewell remarks.

He also thanked the people of all the villages of the 1st Battalion's region, which stretches 330 miles from Marshall in the south to Shishmaref in the north and 520 miles east to west from Huslia to Gambell.

"We sometimes lose sight of the fact that the Guard is a volunteer organization," Haynes said. "But without the support we have found in every village, there would be no

Alaska National Guard. We are here because the people want us to be here."

Korenek, 44, is a traditional part-time Guard member. His full-time job is with the State of Alaska's Division of Adult Corrections, where he is the Nome district supervisor.

Retaining the trained soldiers in his battalion is one of the new commander's main objectives.

"The battalion is mission capable now," Korenek said. "That means we can do the job we've got to do."

"But we need to work on reducing the attrition rate for our trained soldiers. We've got to support them and give them what they deserve."

Korenek said people know if their time is being wasted, and if it is, they won't stay in the Guard. He wants to keep them busy and challenged with the best and most thorough training possible.

"Twenty or 30 years ago, the Guard was sort of a men's social club," Korenek said. "But it's not that way anymore. We've got a mission and a real job to do and we've got to train for it."