

# Mission changes for Togiak area Guard

by Barbara Crane  
Tundra Times reporter

TOGIAK — Change is never easy. But in a Jan. 6 activation ceremony, Alaska Army National Guard soldiers in the Togiak area of Southwestern Alaska accepted the challenge of leaving their old 2nd Battalion to form A Company of the Guard's new 4th Battalion.

"A Company is the nucleus for new Guard units in Southwest Alaska," said Col. Tom Carroll, 207th Group commander, who traveled from Anchorage to Togiak for the ceremony.

"Even though these people are facing much change, they are meeting their new challenges with enthusiasm and dedication."

Togiak will serve as headquarters for the new A Company, with detachments planned in Manokotak, New Stuyahok, Dillingham and the Pribilof Islands.

Maj. Gen. John Schaeffer, head of the Alaska National Guard, presented the new company with an American flag and thanked the men and women for volunteering to form the new company.

"We know it takes some sacrifice to leave the Scout battalion you've been with for years," Schaeffer told the soldiers. "We don't like to put you through a lot of changes, but we know you can handle them."

According to Capt. James Kanulic, A Company commander, the reorganization will change his soldiers' mission and training.

"Before, as an Eskimo Scout unit of the 2nd Battalion, we acted as eyes," Kanulic explained. "We were trained to locate the enemy and report to headquarters on their strength and actions without being detected ourselves."

He said the primary mission now is to be a light infantry unit.

"We will learn how to attack and fight in an actual combat situation," he said.

When it reaches full strength, A Company will provide about 90 jobs in the Togiak region. Fifty-three men and women have already enlisted, and recruiters hope to quickly fill the remaining positions.



*Sgt. 1st Class Robert Blue holds the company's new flag.*

photos by Barbara Crane



*Posing at the Togiak Armory are, from left, Maj. Gen. John Schaeffer, Col. Tom Carroll and Capt. James Kanulic.*