

ANG SCOUT BATTALION IN TACTICAL TESTS

Massive Air Transport Assembles ANG Men

Nearly one thousand Eskimo Scouts are home again, after two weeks of annual field training at the Alaska Army National Guard Camp Carroll training site, at Fort Richardson near Anchorage.

Camp ended last Friday for most men of the Alaska Guard's First Scout Battalion (Nome) and Second Scout Battalion (Bethel), and phase two of a massive airlift that had earlier brought the scouts into Anchorage began again, returning men to 65 home villages scattered across Alaska from Gambell to Barter Island, Dillingham to Barrow.

"This annual encampment provides the only opportunity for the scattered scout units, trained normally to operate as five and ten-man guerrilla-type teams, to work together in battalion and company-sized strength," says Brig. Gen. C.E. Reid, assistant state adjutant general and commander of the Alaska Army Guard.

"As we are every year, we're extremely pleased at the splendid performance with which the scouts carry out assigned tasks," the general said.

The Alaska scouts carry out a unique and important mission for the active military in Alaska.

"They do a tremendous job. For the active military to duplicate their function would require great expense in manpower and logistics," Gen. Reid explains.

"Their homes are scattered half a million square miles of relatively empty, rugged wilderness, much of it along Alaska's western coasts that are within minutes flying time from Soviet Siberia.

The Little Diomed Island scout unit, for instance, is just three miles from Communist-controlled Big Diomed, in the Bering Strait.

On Diomed and elsewhere,

villagers live largely in a subsistence economy, and on long hunting and fishing trips Guard members keep a sharp eye out for unusual activity. Each village has a radio and trained operator, and such 'incidents' are relayed in daily radio reports to battalion headquarters in Nome and Bethel.

"There have been many occasions where this intelligence service by the scouts has paid off, for our side," the general said.

"Unlike most reserve units, their duties are continuing over and above normally scheduled unit drills."

In the event of war or other national emergency, the scouts can quickly become two full-time battalions of Arctic specialists trained in northern warfare, survival and surveillance. They would operate in guerrilla-style combat teams across the sparsely-populated expanse of wilderness Alaska.

At Camp Carroll, ten miles from Anchorage on the Fort Richardson military reservation, the scouts annually practice their deadly art of ambush and counter-guerrilla defense.

This year, both battalions were in the field for five days the first week, living in camouflaged tent camps. The second week, each company individually took their annual Army Training Test in the field, demonstrating proficiency in ambush, patrolling and communications under the watchful eye of regular Army evaluators.

The Guard's annual winter encampment is eagerly looked forward to among the scattered Eskimo Scouts, for on free time the men can visit old friends from other villages and get into Anchorage to buy supplies and equipment to ship home, at their own expense.



BLENDING WITH SURROUNDINGS—A member of Gambell's Company A of the First Scout Battalion is taking part in the ambush of another scout group in realistic tactical exercises around

Camp Carroll near Anchorage recently. The camouflaged Gambell scouts hid in the woods, blending with the snow and trees, while the 'enemy' advanced up a road. —134th PIO Photo



ADVANCING—About a thousand scouts assembled from 65 villages. A company is seen advancing along a road to take part in one of many maneuver assignments given the men. —134th PIO Photo



BRIEFING—Major John Schaefer, commander of the First Scout Battalion, Nome, briefs his company commanders before a tactical exercise. Major is an Alaskan Eskimo from Kotzebue. —134th PIO Photo



ATTACKING—Company D, from Barrow, attacks an 'enemy' position through the woods. Tactical sessions were frighteningly realistic but the firing was from blanks, not bullets. —134th PIO Photo



SURPRISE—The enemy 'agressors' in this camp, at right, got a rude awakening early in the morning when Barrow's Company D slipped quietly into position and attacked. —134th PIO Photo



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