

South Dakota National Guard

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July 12, 2012

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SD Guard remembers visionary leader

By 2nd Lt. Chad Carlson
SDNG Public Affairs Office

RAPID CITY, S.D. – Last month, National Guard enlisted Soldiers and Airmen lost a visionary leader with the passing of Chief Warrant Officer 4 (Ret.) John E. Ball, 77, of Woonsocket.

John graduated from Woonsocket High School in 1953 and entered the Army in September of the same year, serving in Korea until June 1955.

He married Marva Jean Rumelhart on Dec. 30, 1956, at Saint Wilfrid's Catholic Church in Woonsocket.

John enlisted in the National Guard on Sept. 13, 1956, working as a full-time technician from January 1958 to October 1990. He served as a unit administrator in Woonsocket, property book officer in Huron and chief of internal review division at state headquarters in Rapid City.

During his Guard career, he served several short tours of duty, which included Germany and Panama.

John was an integral part in the development of the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS) from day one. He assisted in the development of the constitution and bylaws, which is the foundation of the association.

The South Dakota National Guard Enlisted Association (SDNGEA) was founded in 1960 by a group of senior enlisted noncommissioned officers from the Air and Army Guard. The SDNGEA incorporated with the Mississippi National Guard Enlisted Association in 1972 forming what is now known as EANGUS.

“Since the beginning, the focus was to perpetuate the National Guard in a manner to build camaraderie with the Army and Air; to promote and maintain educational instruction through our legislative process; advance the status, welfare and professionalism of the enlisted members and to maintain adequate national security through the endeavors of the collective enlisted corps,” said Chief Master Sgt. (Ret.) Bruce Anderson, executive director SDNGEA.

Today, EANGUS has associations in all 50 states and 4 territories. It is a member of and for many years chaired, the Military Coalition in Washington D.C.

“Still today, our state and national organizations, to include our auxiliaries, monitor state and federal bills and take a proactive approach to inform and educate the respective legislative bodies as to how it may/will impact the National Guard,” said Anderson.

John contributions include life memberships of the SDNGEA and EANGUS, president of the SDNGEA in 1971 and 1975, the third president of EANGUS from 1976-1978 and he attended nearly every national conference from 1972 to present.

“The largest amount of energy within all of our organizations is trying to maintain what John and so many before us have achieved,” said Anderson. “Current pay rates, GI bill, 50 percent tuition for S.D. residents, distinctive license plates, increases in retirement points, TriCare... the list can go on. John, and others, had the foresight to see that our citizen-Soldiers and Airmen could have a positive impact on how our country trains, pays, mobilizes and treats the National Guard. Our organizations are not military organizations; they are organizations made up of military members, current and retired.”

Active military members cannot lobby for legislation, endorse candidates or campaigns, however, through organizations such as EANGUS, Guardsmen have a voice in the process through the EANGUS executive director.

“John understood all this and facilitated the process by promoting the founding of our national organization,” Anderson said. “He was instrumental, among other enlisted leadership, in this process and yet today we take it for granted.”

“He was a mentor to all new presidents and a wealth of knowledge for their development,” said Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Lamp, former SDNGEA president. “He truly cared about the National Guard and the Enlisted Association and was the epitome of the citizen-Soldier, a true fighter for benefits of the National Guard service member and most of all, he was my friend. I will miss his kind demeanor, cheerful attitude and he will always be an inspiration to me for his commitment to the Enlisted Association and its members.”

“John is shining example of an individual who was devoted to his faith, family and country,” Anderson said. “When asked ‘How are ya’ doing John?’ he’d always come back with ‘Well, I don’t go around buying green bananas.’ He was probably one of the last “real John Wayne’s left in the town.”



John E. Ball
Oct. 26, 1934 - June 8, 2012

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