



Annual Silver Anvil Awards Competition

PREPARED BY
ASSISTANT CHIEF OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS FOR RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON, DC 20310

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To: Chairman

SILVER ANVIL AWARDS COMPETITION
PUBLIC RELATIONS SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC
845 Third Avenue, 12th floor, New York, N.Y. 10022

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It is requested that the entry accompanying this form be entered in the Silver Anvil Awards Competition. A check for \$100.00 in payment of the entry fee is attached.

Name of organization
for which program was carried out: Michigan Army National Guard

Address 2500 S. Washington Ave., Lansing,
(Street) (City)
Michigan 48913
(State) (Zip Code)

Name of assisting agency or counseling firm, if any 126th Public
Affairs Detachment, Michigan Army National Guard

Name of person
authorized to submit entry: Major E. Robert Zarwell, APR, Commander
(Name) (Title)

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Category Number _____ a b c d e
(insert category number and check proper box)

Signature *Robert Zarwell*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Planning

Michigan's Army National Guard overcame many media obstacles in 1980 resulting from over ten years of a reluctance by commanders to meet face to face with reporters. Reluctance which built from the investigative reporting of the 1967 riots and carried through to the seventies with Vietnam.

It's a report on a long term effort to orient commanders and soldiers to media exposure, the rebuilding and training of a public affairs detachment to work with media, and encouragement of media spokesmen to publicly report on the value and worth of Michigan's militia.

Michigan's Guard public relations plan called for positive statements by the media in order to reach an unaware audience.

Research in 1978 indicated that media was ready to work with the Guard. In 1979, research indicated that units were eager for public recognition to increase their memberships. In 1980, McCann-Erickson conducted six focus group sessions to learn that public knowledge was poor if any.

Execution

Using only part-time National Guardsmen, one weekend per month and two weeks in the summer, Michigan was able to turn around its image. It was accomplished through local personal contact with the media as much as five months in advance of the

annual training period. After initial contact, unit IOs continued to learn of media's needs for support and information.

Results

With the help of major media (WXYZ-TV, Detroit, produced a one-half hour "Special Report"; WJBK-TV, Detroit, produced two six-minute segments for "PM Magazine;" Grand Rapids Press published a ten-page Sunday supplement; and other stations and newspapers produced and published news feeds) over a quarter of Michigan's 8.8 million population was reached.

Unit strengths soared over the 100 percent mark in less than 12 months.

Media reports were in-depth studies which positively influenced the public attitude. The image is now changed and is best stated by Rich Fisher of WXYZ-TV's "Special Report:"

"You may be used to seeing Guardsmen plowing snow in a city crippling blizzard...or you may have even seen them activated during a civil disturbance...but the reality is that the Michigan Army National Guard is a lot more than that. The people in the Guard are professionals from business...medicine ...engineering and other fields who also happen to be very good at soldiering.

If there's one point to make about the National Guard it's that they're a highly trained military unit that will be this country's second line of defense in the event of any major U.S. military intervention. THEY ARE INDEED READY FOR WAR."

MICHIGAN SILVER ANVIL ENTRY: Michigan Army National Guard's 1980 Public Relations Program to Change Public Image and Attain Over 100 Percent Membership.

Michigan's Army National Guard overcame many media obstacles in 1980 to achieve a highly successful media relations program which resulted in a change in public attitude toward its units, thus increased enlistments for the year brought its membership to over 100 percent. It was a climb of over ten percentage points from January 1980 to January 1981.

All this in a climate of military negativism due to poor publicity received during the 1967 Detroit riot and lack of publicity due to unfavorable public opinion of the military over the Vietnam conflict.

SITUATION: Since July 1967, when riots dominated Detroit putting guardsmen in confrontation with inner city residents, a negative relationship existed between the Guard and the media. Commanders became reluctant to seek media for fear of investigative reporting. It was followed by the unpopular military image of the late sixties and early seventies during student unrest over the Vietnam war. Not until the draft was over, was there a need to communicate with the public about its militia. Unit strengths in the mid-seventies were around 73 percent of their total membership. Something had to be done.

In 1976, Michigan's Adjutant General, Major General John A. Johnston decided to change the image of the Michigan Guard. He assigned Major E Robert Zarwell to look into the public relations programs, and to assist the recruiting office with marketing programs to determine avenues of approach in reaching the public market place.

A long term plan was developed. It called for intensive media research, but before it was implemented, Michigan's Public Affairs Detachment was rebuilt and trained to work in media formats. Then a network of outstate unit points-of-contact was established and unit information specialists trained through seminars, conferences, briefings and monthly newsletters. Commanders were thoroughly briefed on program concepts to help them overcome media fears. Extensive research was gathered to learn of public, member and media attitudes.

Once the research was correlated, it indicated a willingness of the media to get positively involved. It was learned that unit members sought public recognition. Other research indicated a lack of public support through a lack of public knowledge and appreciation of the Guard.

By 1980, Major Zarwell had rebuilt the public affairs operation. Key people needed to interface with media were now available in the unit and in the field. A mixed media program was conceived to reach the masses of Michigan.

With a professional staff at hand, a network of stringers throughout the state and commanders who are now public relations conscious, a solid program began to materialize on radio, television and newspaper pages throughout the state.

About that same time, the Chief of Staff, Colonel Arthur Ueberroth and the recruiting officer, Major Robert Taylor, identified key recruiting areas. It turned out that when memberships in Detroit and Grand Rapids infantry units reached near full strength, Michigan attained over 100 percent membership.

With that guidance, a strategy was developed.

STRATEGY: Major Zarwell reviewed all available research from military and civilian resources from which he developed a media mix weighted with electronic media. Through mass communication, it was possible to reach nearly 25 percent of the state's population.

Instruction went out to the field public information specialists to contact their radio, television and newspapers on a regular basis and to emphasize our open invitation to spend a few days with their local unit at summer camp. To help encourage follow-through on the program, workshops and briefings were held, giving outstate unit members hands-on media training. Each step of the program was carefully planned so that everyone in the chain of command had time to assess the values and to offer suggestions to increase the worth of public relations activities.

Several instate publications were used to communicate program elements. They are the Michigan National Guardsman, a monthly newspaper; IO's Information, a frequent newsletter; notes from the commander's staff meeting; and several handouts for commanders at their semiannual conferences.

In order to concentrate efforts, personal contact was made with key media in Grand Rapids, Detroit, Lansing and Flint-Saginaw ADI's (areas of dominant influence). They were invited to live in the field under simulated combat conditions with troops from their local areas. Many took up the offer and learned of the hardships and sacrifices made by Michigan National Guard members during their annual summer training. With this experience, media representatives also learned the value and worth of Guard training.

MAJOR PUBLIC RELATIONS ACTIVITIES:

1. Coordinating annual media visits to Camp Grayling.
2. Creating an awards program recognizing media support in eight categories.
3. Writing and producing video tape documentaries for release to television stations as part of a hands-on training program for detachment personnel.
4. Production of a daily half-hour radio show for WGRY, Grayling, package features for WQON, Grayling each day and make up a full page photo feature for Grayling's weekly Avalanche.

5. Personal media contact by key operatives in several major markets months in advance of scheduled events to coordinate production of three documentaries and several mini documentaries.

RESULTS: Significance of the planning and execution were the results achieved. Collective unit strengths in Michigan increased from 92.3 percent to over 102 percent in less than 12 months, and an improved public image as presented by the major media. A greater awareness was achieved among the people of Michigan who phoned and wrote to television stations and newspapers.

Through our major efforts in Grand Rapids and Detroit, over 668,000 people saw how their Guard trained and learned the why of it all. Another 540,000 people read about it in the Grand Rapids Sunday supplement Wonderland. It is estimated that over 2.2 million of Michigan's 8.8 million population were reached through the total efforts of the Public Affairs Detachment and outstate network of stringers.

In Grand Rapids, for instance:

WOTV-TV reached over 109,030 individuals.

In Detroit:

WXYZ-TV's one-half hour "Special Report" reached over 200,664 on September 4, 1980.

WJBK-TV's "PM Magazine" reached over 234,108 on September 24 and 25, 1980.

In other markets, like Flint-Saginaw:

WNEM-TV's mini documentary and news clip reached over 114,413 in July and August 1980.

and in Grayling:

WQON-FM and WGRY-AM's half-hour daily show reached over 13,300 in addition to The Avalanche's circulation to 3,800 during annual training, August 2-16, 1980.