

Army company gathers to honor Rudder

By GLENN WHITLEY
Battalion Campus Editor

Nearly 100 veterans of the U.S. Army Rangers, most survivors of the Battalion's D-Day assault of the beaches of Normandy, will attend memorial services here tomorrow.

Gen. J. Earl Rudder, Rudder's commanding officer and a former president of the Texas A&M University System.

The service will be part of the annual reunion which the six Ranger Battalions will hold at Houston's Shamrock Hilton Hotel today through Sunday.

"We were patterned after the British commando units," said Gen. W. "Ke" Eikner, president of the Rudder Chapter of the National Ranger Battalion Association.

The 2nd Battalion was the first Ranger unit organized in April 1943 in Tennessee. Rudder, then major, became the commanding officer soon after the unit was formed.

All hand-picked volunteers, the Rangers were trained for special missions. Eikner said Rudder was a high commander when occasion demanded and he "straightened the lot out."

Eikner said Rudder explained his mission to them in this way: "If I have your cooperation, I'll be your end and we'll get the job done and we have some fun together. If I don't get your cooperation, I'll be a pain so-and-so and we'll still get the job done."

The Rangers were specialists in amphibious warfare, attacks on fortified enemy positions and night operations.

"We did not have a special way of operating," Eikner said. The mission was assigned and their training was adapted for every individual mission.

Eikner said the Normandy invasion was the first full operation for the battalion as a whole.

"It did appear to be a suicide-type mission," Eikner said. The Rangers were confident though, he said, because their training was so intense and they knew what to expect.

In the attack on Pointe du Hoc, the 2nd Battalion was faced with scaling cliffs that rose 100 feet from the landing beach and wrestling guns and positions away from the Germans at the top of the cliffs. They suffered a casualty rate of 60 per cent. Gen. Rudder was wounded twice, but refused to be evacuated. The assignment of the attack at Pointe du Hoc at Normandy led Gen. Omar Bradley to "No soldier in my command has ever been wished a more difficult task than that which befell the 34-year-old commander of this Ranger Force."

After the war ended, the War Department issued a book on small unit operations describing the Normandy invasion as one of the four outstanding operations of the war.

The Ranger veterans will meet with Rudder's widow, Mrs. Margaret Rudder in her College Station home tomorrow.

"He thought an awful lot of these men," she said "It's quite a tribute to him."

Eikner said the trip to College



Gen. Earl Rudder at Normandy during D-Day in 1944.

Station was designed to allow the men who were unable to attend his funeral in 1970 to pay homage to him.

Rudder is honored in a memorial service by the people of the Pointe du Hoc region every year on the anniversary of his death, Mrs. Rudder

said. There is also a French memorial service held on June 6, the anniversary of D-Day.

A monument built with funds raised by the French was also placed on the beach at Normandy and dedicated to the Rangers and Gen. Rudder.

Rudder was appointed vice president of Texas A&M in 1958 and became president a year later. He was named system president in 1965 and held that position until his death March 23, 1970.

The public ceremony is scheduled for 10:30 a.m. in College Station Cemetery and will include a color guard composed of Aggies from the 49th Armored Division and a fly-by of Texas National Guard jets.

After the services, the Rangers will tour the J. Earl Rudder conference tower and auditorium complex.

Pregnancy benefits clause no longer a requirement

United Press International

AUSTIN — Insurance companies are no longer required to provide pregnancy benefits to basic accident health policies and probably will refuse to sell such protection as a supplemental coverage.

Jan. 1, the chairman of the State Insurance Board said yesterday.

Christie said the 2-1 vote by the state board Monday will make it impossible for individuals to obtain insurance protection for medical costs connected to pregnancy and childbirth.

"I doubt it will even be offered," Christie said yesterday. "It's really going to discourage any type of maternity benefits in individual policies."

Most group insurance policies include maternity benefits, but 20 to 25 per cent of Texas residents are covered by individual policies rather than group programs.

The three-man insurance board last December voted to require inclusion of pregnancy benefits individual health and accident policies issued after Jan. 1, 1978.

Insurance companies protested vigorously and Christie's counterparts on the board switched sides Monday to drop requirements for including pregnancy benefits in basic coverage and also to make it more difficult for companies that want to provide such protection on a supplemental basis.

Ned Price and Durwood Manford voted to require any company wishing to offer pregnancy benefits to provide payments at least 10 times the daily room and board benefit specified for other medical circumstances.

"Although it sounds good it means pregnancy benefits are less likely to be included," Christie said.

Christie said one company had filed a proposal for an experimental policy that would provide partial pregnancy coverage one year after a policy was purchased and complete coverage after three years.

"The tragic thing is that even that experimental policy will be prohibited," he said.

Industry spokesmen said men and elderly people will never need pregnancy benefits and do not want to pay for coverage they cannot use.

Christie said women are forced to pay for a number of coverages they cannot use such as insurance benefits for prostate surgery. He said pregnancy benefits should be included in basic health policies.

"I think it's the fair thing to do,"

Christie said. "Unfortunately pregnancy is still considered by some as something that's voluntarily assumed and in many cases it's not. Besides it's a joint effort between a male and a female."

More juveniles referred to authorities after arrests

United Press International

AUSTIN — About half of the more than 59,000 children, aged 16, who were arrested last year experienced their first contact with juvenile authorities, the Texas Judicial Council said yesterday.

During 1976, juvenile authorities reported a total of 59,965 children were processed in 67,047 referrals to probation departments. The council said 55 per cent of the referrals had their first contact with juvenile authorities.

Police departments made 86.2 per cent of the referrals while the remaining 13.8 per cent were made by social agencies, parents, schools and other sources.

The council said 79 per cent of the referrals during 1976 were attending school at the time of their contact with juvenile authorities; 15 per cent were drop-outs and 2 per cent were suspended or expelled from school.

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"I thought they'd laugh at me."

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