

# Bush accused of lying about service

By Matt Kelley  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Democrats pounced on the latest revelations about President Bush's Air National Guard service Wednesday, saying newly released records show Bush shirked his duty and lied about it.

Bush's spokesmen said the records back up the president's assertion that he fulfilled all of his Vietnam-era military obligations and served honorably.

Meanwhile, the Texas Air National Guard released 128

pages of records on Bush's service from 1968 to 1973, all of which had been previously released by the White House. Two Texas officials said in sworn affidavits that the records were all the Texas Guard had on Bush's service.

With national security and the war on terrorism looming large on voters' minds, supporters of Bush and Democratic nominee John Kerry are attacking each candidate's Vietnam War records. Republicans have accused Kerry, a decorated Vietnam combat veteran, of fabricating the events which led to his five medals. Democrats point to gaps in Bush's stateside Air National Guard service in 1972 and 1973 to say Bush shirked his duty.

The Defense Department on

Tuesday released more than two dozen pages of records about Bush and his former Texas unit. They showed Bush flew for 336 hours in military jets after his flight training and ranked in the middle of his class.

The latest records do not shed any light on key questions about Bush's service: whether or where he trained in late 1972 and early 1973, why he skipped a required medical exam and whether he was investigated or punished for skipping the exam and six months' worth of training in 1972.

Pentagon officials said they discovered the documents released Tuesday while performing a more comprehensive search "out of an abundance of caution" in response to a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit by The Associated Press.

The newly released records also showed that while Bush says he was in Alabama training with another Guard unit in 1972, his home unit in Texas was participating in the air defense of the southern United States by keeping two jet fighters constantly ready for launch within five minutes' notice.

"When his unit was placed on a 24-hour alert mission to protect our country from surprise attack, why did George Bush not report for duty?" said Democratic National Committee head Terry McAuliffe.

**"... Why did George Bush not report for duty?"**

— Terry McAuliffe  
Democratic National Committee head

spokesman Llewellyn Grant said. Grant said even if the man was infected, it would not pose a threat to the general public. He said secondary transmission of the virus is rare.

"Casual person-to-person contact to develop this is very uncommon," he said of the virus, which has a six- to 21-day incubation period and symptoms include fever, muscle aches, sore throat, nausea and chest and abdominal pain. "About 80 percent of human infections are pretty mild and asymptomatic."

Crew members aboard the ship, which arrived at the entrance to the Houston Ship Channel on Sunday, have been visited by infectious disease specialists and will continue to be monitored, said Michael Hanson, a spokesman for New York-based OSG Shipping Management Inc., which operates the ship.

# Ship awaiting tests on cause of death

By Pam Easton  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HOUSTON — A 20-member crew remained aboard their ship Wednesday awaiting word on whether they could enter the Houston Ship Channel after a crew member died, possibly from the West African virus known as Lassa fever.

The ship "Overseas Marilyn," which left Africa on Aug. 13, was voluntarily quarantined in the Gulf of Mexico while the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta awaited blood and tissue samples for testing. The man died Aug. 31 and his body was removed from the ship Sunday.

Lassa fever is spread by rodent droppings and urine or by contact with the bodily fluid of an infected individual. The virus can cause hypertension, shock, fever and death in severe cases, CDC

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