

# N.M.'s 720th Bound for War



**Ayer Y Hoy**  
***Los Reyes de Albuquerque***

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**Side 1: Corrido Del 720 • Desde Que Dios Amanece •  
Volver, Volver • Viva Quien Sabe Querer**

**Side 2: Cu-Cu-Ru-Cu-Cu Paloma • Ay Jalisco •  
Solamente Una Vez • La Paloma • La Bamba**

**Dedicated to the members of the 720th Transportation Company and their families**

# N.M.'s 720th Bound for War



RICHARD PIPES / JOURNAL

Members of the New Mexico National Guard 720th Transportation Company leave for Saudi Arabia from Fort Bliss, Texas.

By Fritz Thompson

JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

FORT BLISS, Texas — Under a drizzly, frigid sky, 131 men and women from half a dozen little towns in northeastern New Mexico filed aboard a huge transport plane Thursday afternoon, bound for war.

Clad in jungle camouflage, lugging full packs and heavy weapons, members of the New Mexico National Guard 720th Transportation Company are going to Saudi Arabia to drive big trucks and haul heavy equipment.

As they stood in formation in a drafty hangar moments before departure, the soldiers bowed their heads and listened to a short prayer. The words echoed off the cold metal walls of the building. The soldiers made the sign of the cross and fell silent.

## 131 Guardsmen and Women From Northeastern Towns

They come from a smattering of communities — Las Vegas, Springer, Mora, Villanueva, Wagen Mound.

Capt. Danny Cruz of Springer said his goodbyes Thursday morning.

"I told my dad I'd be back in time for deer hunting season," he said, "and I told my fiancée I love her."

The 720th is family; there are husbands and wives, brothers, fathers and sons. Some have graying hair; others are barely old enough to shave.

The unit even has its own song — "El Corrido de 720th." Phillip Tafaya is carrying 10 cassette tapes of it to the Middle East.

"It's a very emotional song," he said. "It talks about how everybody up there felt when we got called up and sent off to Saudi Arabia.

"It's gonna be a big hit. The last time we were home, they played it just about all day on the radio station in Las Vegas."

The soldiers come from a variety of jobs. Spec. 4 Julio Campos, assistant manager of a Wendy's, is "looking forward to going over there and doing my job and then coming back to my burgers."

Set. Tony Garcia, whiling away an idle moment with earphones and a tape, wants to come back to his job as superintendent of schools in Wagen Mound.

"Morale is real good," said Cruz. "The news that the air strikes have been effective has eased the tension a little bit."

Marisele Balderrama, a specialist 4 truck driver, said she's nervous about going.

"It hasn't hit me yet," she said. "I think when that plane lands and they rush us out, reality will set in."

She is one of 11 women in the company. "We don't get any special treatment," she said. "We take care of each other. We do our jobs."

Maj. Gen. Edward Baca, the adjutant general for the New Mexico National Guard, arrived just as the company was about to board the plane. He gave a short pep talk, shook hands with each soldier, and offered words of encouragement.

As they boarded the plane, each soldier was handed a box lunch and a Bible. The Bible's cover was in camouflage.