



THANKSGIVING "OVER THERE"

Modern Military Voices from the Front

Vincent Edward Garcia, US Army:

"The year was 1984, I was an E-2 in the Army. I was 18 years old and it was my first time away from home. I was stationed in Fort Gordon, Augusta, Georgia. Although there was no snow, it was very cold and the thought of not spending Thanksgiving with my family made it seem even colder. The Thanksgiving Day menu consisted of all the traditional Thanksgiving trimmings. Somehow, though, it didn't feel like Thanksgiving without my mother's cooking. After dinner, my platoon and I gathered in the recreation room and watched football. This was one Thanksgiving where I really appreciated the Thanksgivings that had gone before."

Mark A. Wright, US Navy:

"I joined the Navy in October, 1982 (and look forward to retiring in October 2002). I have spent many Thanksgivings over seas -- and under the seas. I remember one Thanksgiving in Alexandria, Egypt. Several shipmates and myself went out into the ancient town and ate some "mystery food" in one of the quaint little stone restaurants. Most of my Thanksgivings in the Navy have been spent under the ocean in a Navy submarine. We have turkey and ham and all the associated food, but it always inside a metal tube about 400 feet under the water. Happy Thanksgiving!"

Anonymous Air Force officer, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, 1997:

"I've been in the Air Force for 23 years and was stationed all over the world. We always said there were 2 dinners that the military couldn't screw up -- Thanksgiving and Christmas. That's because the "boss" was down with his family for those dinners. The Colonel, his wife and kids would have their holiday dinner with us. It was a real dinner for them, too, not just for show -- they would really chow down. It was good for us to see the kids -- we would see French kids or German kids or whatever, depending on where we were stationed, but it was really good to talk to American kids who understood what Thanksgiving was all about."