

In war and in peace, the militia of the State of Maryland has served with great distinction. For the past eight decades, the 229th Transportation Battalion, or its parent units, has figured prominently in the achievement of an outstanding record for the Maryland National Guard. It was first called, I am told, the Monumental City Guards, organized in 1879, and three years later it became a company of the Maryland National Guard. Designated as the first separate company of the National Guard, it was activated, trained and sent to active duty in the Spanish American War. At the outbreak of the First World War, the Company was mobilized and mustered into active federal service, and, in April of 1918, as a unit of the 372nd Infantry Regiment, it entered combat, serving with gallantry on the historic battlefields of Argonne Forest, Verdun and Alsace-Lorraine. One of its sergeants was awarded the French Croix de Guerre with silver star for leading the company to battle when its commander was seriously wounded, and the company shared honors with the other units when the regiment was awarded the Croix de Guerre with palms by the French for the heroic manner in which it accomplished its mission on the field of battle.

When war clouds loomed again in 1940, the unit was designated as service company of the 372nd Infantry Regiment, and in March, 1941, it was mustered into active federal service, performing in encampments here at home and finally on overseas duty in Hawaii.

In the Korean engagement, several units of this battalion, under your commanding officer, Col. Vernon F. Greene, performed in a superior manner in our country's struggle with the communists. For its service in Korea, the battalion, then designated as the 231st, was awarded many high honors. Among the accomplishments that have been cited is that, during 1953, its trucks traveled 7,143,285 miles, carrying 1,492,198 tons of cargo and 917,881 passengers.

This is a grand history—a history which should inspire in the hearts of all the officers and the men of the 229th Transportation Battalion a pride in outfit that is so essential to the morale and spirit of any military organization.

As your Governor, and by our Constitution, your commander-in-chief, it is a high honor to take part in this ceremony in which we dedicate a new home for the battalion and the companies which comprise it. As we do so, let us all recall the splendid role that the militia has played in the history of our State and nation, and let us dedicate ourselves to the security of our republic and to the preservation of our liberties and our way of life.