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Introduction and remarks at National Guard Military Ball, Township Auditorium

Strom Thurmond

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INTRODUCTION REMARKS PRIOR TO TALK BY GOVERNOR THURMOND ON NATIONAL BROADCAST OF NATIONAL GUARD BALL, TOWNSHIP AUDITORIUM, COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA, JANUARY 22, 1949, 11:15 TO 11:45 P.M.

RAY: Ladies and gentlemen, I've introduced a great many distinguished people on the Military Ball program. Somewhere close to the top of the list, however, I'll have to place our next guest. He's a key man in the military affairs of South Carolina ... a great State that has produced outstanding battle tacticians since the time it was one of the 13 original colonies. But this guest is in a class of his own, for he's one of few living men who can wear the nation's highest decoration... the coveted blue ribbon with the white stars. Here is the holder of the Congressional Medal of Honor, and Adjutant General of South Carolina, General James C. Dozier!

(APPLAUSE)

GENERAL DOZIER: Thanks, Ray. Men of the South Carolina National Guard, I want to welcome you and your ladies to this great event. You've worked hard, and this grand ball tonight is a small part of gratitude for your efforts. I'm happy to see so many of you here from throughout the State. But to give you the official greetings I'm here to present another speaker. He's a man most of you met when we traveled the State together to organize our first postwar units back in 1946. He's a staunch believer in the National Guard. He was an airborne officer who fought valiantly and was wounded in World War Two. Here is the Chief Executive of our State, his excellency, Governor J. Strom Thurmond.

(APPLAUSE)
GOVERNOR THURMOND — General Dozier, and ladies and gentlemen:

I'm here tonight for one purpose, and that is to honor the men of South Carolina's National Guard. This is 1949, a year when television and jet airplanes are accepted as commonplace. In our Guard units, we have a force that's just as modern as either of these. Behind them lie all the tradition and gallantry that have been a part of the South since before the Revolutionary War. They trace their origin to outfits like the Beaufort Artillery at Beaufort; the Washington Light Infantry and the Sumter Guards, both in Charleston, and the Kershaw Guards at Camden. Some of those companies still meet in their original muster rooms, with the same family names answering roll call. Traditionally, the South is supposed to be leisurely and unhurried, but when it comes to organizing and training the National Guard, our State has been among the swiftest. Out of 116 units authorized, all but three small medical units have been organized, and we have 112 ground troop units and 4 air units. We've built up existing regiments like the 118th Infantry, which won 6 of the 78 Medals of Honor in World War I. We've formed new ones to fit the needs of modern-day.
These are your citizen soldiers --- men from everyday life --- who spring to their arms in times of crisis and win our wars. Most Guard units in the State still have some positions open. If a man can meet our standards, he'll find everything to gain by joining. And let me say in passing, that we in South Carolina believe firmly in the control of the Guard by the States, in accordance with the militia clause of the U. S. Constitution. We vigorously oppose the present effort by some of our military leaders to Federalize the Guard. It is the responsibility of the State, by tradition and by law. We cherish and respect that responsibility, and we are deeply proud of the South Carolina National Guard.
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