

Air Guard wife named spouse of year

For the first time in the award's history, an Air Guard wife was named Oregon National Guard Spouse of the Year, at National Guard Association ceremonies held at the Red Lion Inn in Portland Ore., recently. The award recognizes personal contribution to the home, the community and the Guard.

Jacqueline June "Jackey" Mitchell, wife of CMSgt. Bob J. Mitchell of the 244th Combat Communications Squadron, Portland International Airport, is a people-oriented woman who renders assistance and comfort where it is needed.

In the Portland area where she and her husband reside, she is the neighborhood "helping hand." "Five neighbors sort of depend on us," she said. "They depend on Bob as much as they do me for maintenance, errands, and other jobs around the house.

"There is a 90-year old woman who lives across the street from us. We keep in contact with her and take her out to dinner once in awhile. She has given me a key to her home so I can check on her.

Her helping nature takes her out three days a week to work at the Red Cross Bloodmobile, sealing, handing out blood packs, ushering to the tables and the canteen and working in the canteen. Her involvement with the Emblem Club, the women's auxiliary to the Elks Club, takes her into more charity work, purchasing and delivering greeting cards to the elderly, working with a shelter home for battered women and into local school activities.

She is active in other civic organizations as well, selling Buddy Poppies for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, making bandages for the Cancer Society and working with the March of Dimes. When United Airlines flight 173 crashed she volunteered, working from early in the evening until 3 a.m.

As a service to the Air Guard, Jackey instituted a babysitting and transportation service for the young mothers who are members of the 244th CCS. Both Eastern Oregon natives, Jackey from Baker and Bob from Mosier and Baker, the two have spent most of their lives in the state. They went to school together before he went into the service.

"He was scheduled to go overseas a couple of times, but didn't, due to family emergencies—one of which I caused," she said.

After the birth of one of their children, she was in a Oakland Calif. hospital and not expected to live. He was in Rhode Island and his gear was on board ship to Germany. At the last minute the authorities pulled his gear

and he returned to Oakland. She was in the hospital for two weeks until recovery.

Mitchell has been a member of the Oregon Air National Guard for 38 years. He recently retired as a technician for the squadron, but is still an active member of his unit.

"I learned to live with the military when Bob was in the Army Air Corps," Jackey said. "I developed a lot of patience from that. Much of the time we were apart, when he was in another part of the States. I rather like his being in the Guard, and often when he has gone to schools and field training, I have been able to go with him."

The couple will have been married 38 years in November. They were married exactly a month before Pearl Harbor, she said.

The couple have two sons and five grandchildren.

Her message to other Guard wives is this:

"It's rewarding and gives you a good feeling to do good for other people. I have enjoyed it—and it has been appreciated."





