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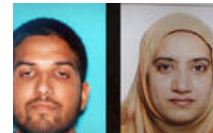
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By **LAUREN JOHNSTON** / CBS/AP / February 13, 2004, 6:44 PM

Bush Releases Military Records

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President Bush, trying to calm a political storm, ordered the release of all of his Vietnam-era military records Friday to counter Democrats' suggestions that he shirked his duty in the Texas Air National Guard.

"The president felt everything should be made available to the public," White House press secretary Scott McClellan said. "There were some who sought to leave a wrong impression that there was something to hide when there is not."

CBS News Chief White House Correspondent John Roberts reports the records, some 400 pages worth, detail the President's request to be transferred to Alabama: First to a reserve unit in May of 1972 - then when that request was denied - to another Alabama unit in September.

In another, **Roberts** reports, the President is stripped of his flying status in September of 1972. In another, he acknowledges he may be called to active duty to make up for "unsatisfactory participation" -- then is called up in May of 1973 to fill in a flurry of dates to achieve honorable discharge.

While less than sterling, officials note the records prove the President was where he said he was, when he said he was.

Roberts also reports the first eyewitness who claims he can put President Bush on the Alabama National Guard base came forward. Bill Calhoun, a former Guard officer says Mr. Bush was assigned to him.

"He sat in my office he would study his training manuals, read safety magazines.

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military type stuff," Calhoun told **Roberts**. Calhoun provided records to **CBS News** to prove he was on the base at the time. He says the President regularly drilled during the months of May through October 1972, when Mr. Bush was working on an election campaign.

"I know he was in there on drills, uh, four months. And it could have been five and it even could have been six."

But Calhoun's account appears to be at odds with records released by the White House. They show that President Bush logged no Guard duty -- anywhere -- from April 17th until October 28th.

And former Guard Pilot Bob Mintz -- who was with the Alabama unit at the time -- says the base was all abuzz about a politically-connected Lieutenant coming in. But Mintz claims he never saw Mr. Bush -- and expects the newcomer would have stood out.

"I just don't see how you could, ah, walk into a military squadron of people who are intimately familiar with each other and their jobs and things and not recognize him as a stranger, ya know?" said Mintz.

Bush's medical records — dozens of pages in all — were opened for examination by reporters in the Roosevelt Room but the material was not being distributed publicly.

Bush's service record has been an issue in each of his presidential campaigns and resurfaced this year when Terry McAuliffe, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, said Bush had been AWOL — absent without leave — during his time in Alabama.



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Bush enlisted in the Texas Air National Guard at Ellington Air Force Base on May 27, 1968. The last day he was paid for Guard duty was July 30, 1973. He was placed on inactive Guard duty six months before his commitment at his request because he was starting Harvard Business School. He was honorably discharged.

While he performed most of his service in Texas, Bush transferred to an Alabama guard unit in 1972 because he was working as the political director for the Senate campaign of Winton Blount, a Bush family friend. White House officials say Bush recalls serving both in Texas and Alabama. On Tuesday and Wednesday, the White House provided a dental record and payroll information from his file.

The pay records show Bush, who was a 1st lieutenant, was paid for 25 days of service between May 1972 and May 1973, the year Democrats have been questioning. The pay records, however, do not say what Bush did to receive pay, or where he did it.

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