

September 8, 2004 CBS Evening News Report Introduction

Rather: Tonight, a CBS News *60 Minutes* Exclusive, new information on President George W. Bush's record in the National Guard. Newly discovered documents spark new questions.

This is the *CBS Evening News* with Dan Rather reporting from CBS News Headquarters in New York.

Rather: Good Evening, there are new questions tonight about President Bush's service in the Texas Air National Guard in the late 1960s and early 70s and about his insistence that he met his military service obligations. CBS News has exclusive information including documents that now shed new light on the President's service record. *60 Minutes* has obtained government documents that indicate Mr. Bush may have received preferential treatment in the Guard after not fulfilling his commitments.

As a pilot for the Texas Air National Guard, then Lieutenant Bush was assigned to fly F-102 Fighters out of Houston's Ellington Air Force Base. Early on, he received excellent evaluations, reports released years ago by the White House.

What's never surfaced before are these four governmental documents from the personal files of the late Colonel Jerry Killian, Bush's squadron commander. They could help answer lingering questions about whether Lieutenant Bush followed orders and otherwise fully met his military commitments.

The first memo is a direct order to take a physical, a requirement for all pilots. Mr. Bush never took that physical.

Another memo refers to a phone call from the lieutenant in which he and his commander discussed options of how Bush "can get out of coming to drill from now to November" and that due to political campaign commitments "he may not have time."

On August 1, 1972 Colonel Killian wrote that he grounded Lieutenant Bush for "failure to perform USAF/Texas Air National Guard standards and for failure to take his annual physical as ordered." A year after Lieutenant Bush's suspension from flying, Killian is asked to write another favorable assessment. Killian's memo, titled "CYA," reads he is being pressured by higher-ups to give the young pilot a favorable yearly evaluation, to, in effect, "sugar coat" his review. He refuses, saying, "I'm having trouble running interference and doing my job." A spokesman for President Bush did not challenge the authenticity of the documents but dismisses the new information as strictly partisan politics.

The *60 Minutes* report tonight contains more of this revealing paperwork and an interview with the man who says he pulled the strings in Texas to get George W. Bush

and other wealthy, prominent young men into the Guard, safe from duty in Vietnam. It's on *60 Minutes* tonight at eight, seven Central, here on CBS.

September 8, 2004, CBS Evening News Report by John Roberts

Dan Rather: Now all of this comes, of course, in the middle of a presidential race in which the military service records of both candidates had been under attack. CBS News Chief White House Correspondent John Roberts has more of the Bush Administration's reaction to the *60 Minutes* report.

John Roberts: It was just what the White House had hoped to avoid, new scrutiny of the President's military record just as he seeks to reinforce his credentials as a wartime leader. Officials were quick to suggest, Well who knew what Lieutenant Colonel Killian was really thinking?

Dan Bartlett: We were trying to read the mind of somebody who has been dead for more than ten years. The fact of the matter is there are people alive today that show and demonstrate that President Bush performed his duties.

John Roberts: But there are more new questions tonight about whether Mr. Bush fulfilled his Guard duty. In 1973, leaving Texas for Massachusetts, President Bush agreed to seek out and sign up with the reserve unit there but never did. And though his attendance record was erratic, he was subject to neither discipline nor active duty call-up as provided for in the regulations.

Larry Corb, who now works for a liberal think tank, was Chief of Reserve Affairs in Ronald Reagan's Pentagon.

Larry Corb: Essentially, Bush gained the system to avoid serving his country the way that most of his contemporaries had to.

John Roberts: White House officials insist the President did his duty, met the requirements for an honorable discharge and they held back nothing in taking on Ben Barnes, the former Texas Speaker of the House, who claims he pulled strings to get George Bush in the National Guard and avoid Vietnam.

Dan Bartlett: I chalk it up to politics, they play dirty down in Texas, I've been there, I see how it works. But the bottom line is, is that there's no truth to this.

John Roberts: This is dirty politics?

Dan Bartlett: Oh I think it is.

John Roberts: The Democrats certainly wasted no time in jumping all over these new allegations against the President. They are eager to turn the tables on the issue of Vietnam service and put a little drag on the President's post-convention bounce, Dan.

Dan Rather: John Roberts reporting live from the White House. Thanks.