

AS WE SEE IT . . .



ACTIONS VERSUS WORDS

IF America's defense muscles ever have felt a sudden surge of peacetime strength, they did in February in the form of roughly 23,600 new National Guardsmen and Air Guardsmen.

This almost incredible figure—enlisted during the 22 days of February culminating in Washington's Birthday—has bolstered the strength of the Nation's senior Civilian Component far beyond the hopeful expectations of even NGB officials.

And as a result, the highest civilian and military officials of the Government, as well as the public at large, again have had reason to sit up and take notice of a component that, frequently against odds, surprises those who don't know it very well, by turning-in amazing performance in lieu of fancy promises.

It now looks as though the National Guard may reach its strength goal of 477,500—407,100 Army and 70,400 Air—by the end of this Fiscal Year, 30 June. The end of last January saw 442,011 on the Army and Air Guard's rolls, a figure that alone represented a sizeable increase from the slumbersome Summer months.

A moderate note, however, has been sounded by some NGB officials. Taking inevitable attrition into account—drop-outs due to all kinds of causes (of which a major one is enlistment into the Regular Services)—they expect the month-end strength to show about a 12,000-man gain.

On the other hand, there are many indications that the effects of the "Muster Day" achievement will continue to be felt in the form of abnormal strength gains for several months to come, for experience indicates that many who weren't in a position to join on the day of the big drive itself, were "softened-up" in readiness for a further try.

One thing is certain: the National Guard's recruiting efforts have been felt, not only in the gain columns of strength reports, but by the whole Defense Establishment.

Significance of this impressive achievement extends far beyond the "mere" numerical totals, however.

The total Federal appropriation for recruiting support through the National Guard Bureau in this Fiscal Year is \$300,000. That amount covers both Army and Air National Guard. It represents far less than \$1 per individual of current, active, participating strength in a component that is 100% "Ready Reserve."

Contrasted with that is a direct allocation of somewhere around \$800,000 for Army Reserve recruiting

alone. (The Air Force Reserve has its own \$300,000.) It is difficult to calculate how much that works out to, per "body," in light of complicating factors: large numbers of personnel carried on Reserve lists but only a small proportion actively participating, and a much lower ratio of enlisted to officer strength. On the basis of any computation, it is evident that proportionately far more dollars are being poured into the Army Reserve recruiting effort, than to the Guard's drive covering both Army and Air.

And that is only part of the story. It is a baffling task to compute the dollar value of both cash and man-hours consumed out of the Defense Department's and the Active Army's own appropriations and personnel resources in behalf of the Army Reserve effort. Defense and Army officials have "put on the heat" for a one-sided drive spotlighting the Reserve and virtually ignoring the Guard. High Army officers at Departmental level have been beat over the head (figuratively speaking, of course) to produce results, and in the time-honored manner, the head-beating has moved right down the chain of command from Army Commanders to Military District Commanders to Reserve unit commanders. Impressive numbers of Active Army personnel of all ranks have been drawn into the effort to produce "bodies" for the Army Reserve. As a consequence, the comparative outlay per "body," Reserve as compared to Guard, jumps materially.

True, the National Guard has been acknowledged publicly to be the stronger, more active of the two. It is a recognized military principle that in battle, if one regiment is floundering and another is succeeding brilliantly, the wise commander sacrifices the failing effort and reinforces the winning one. That principle seems to have been ignored in the current situation.

All that aside, the policy seems to have been accepted that "the reserves" as a whole must be built-up.

It may be too early to appraise the results in terms of men actually participating. Especially in light of the great differential between the weight of effort put behind the Army Reserve program by Federal authorities, as compared with what they have done for the Guard, there will be grounds for careful study and analysis if the Reserve program doesn't produce five to ten times the number of participating people the Guard has produced with its pittance.

But as matters stand right now, it is evident that the Guard's accomplishments speak louder than others' words.

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dear guardsmen:

Anyone who can get someone else to do his thinking for him, really has got it made, as the man says.

We keep trying to dream-up ideas for feature articles and coax people to write them, but once in a while someone else thinks-up the kind of piece he'd like to read in our paper and tells us. Remember, for instance, Capt Robert F Bennett's suggestion for some stuff on what happens when a National Guard outfit gets called upon for emergency duty all of a sudden? We publicized his thoughts in our February issue.

Then various California National Guard outfits found themselves in precisely the kind of spot Captain Bennett, across the Country in New York, had visualized.

The 40 Armd Div's Maj W D McGlasson picked up the ball and carried it. He latched onto official reports from officers involved in helping untangle the mess at a gory train wreck, and then at a flood; and he talked to people; and he rustled-up some photos; put it all together into a readable and informative story, and got it to us in time for this issue.

Things don't often develop that fast. We've received a number of other excellent story ideas and they're cooking. Sometimes it takes a while to find the man who can and will work-up the kind of piece we're looking for, and then a while longer to refine it and bring out points that need explanation, and so on. But we'll have more of them.

Keep on feeding us your ideas and we'll start them through the mill.

THE STAFF

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our cover

Like the Minute Men of old, recruits flocked to the Colors throughout the Nation on "Muster Day" to add new strength to the National Guard. And like the Minute Men, "Muster Day" itself stems from an ancient practice in Massachusetts. Therefore, there is special significance in the Cover photo of the Bay State's Gov Christian A Herter administering the enlistment oath to more than 500 recruits in the Boston State House Hall of Flags, during the traditional Governor's Reception. (Boston Record-American photo by Lou Teton.)