



JAMES F. CANTWELL  
President  
National Guard Association  
of the United States

## The Guard And Viet Nam

**T**HE National Guard has been cast in a role, in the Viet Nam emergency, to which it is not accustomed. It has been kept on the sidelines, in a backup status, while the Active Forces have been augmented the slow and difficult way, with untrained Draftees.

What needs to be understood, most particularly by National Guardsmen themselves, is that this departure from the traditions and practices of the past does not represent a downgrading of the National Guard nor does it reflect a lack of confidence in the Guard as the first-line backup for our Active Forces. Indeed, the Guard's current level of training and operational readiness has provided defense planners with a flexibility which they frequently have desired but seldom achieved in time of danger.

Augmentation of the Active Forces by draft rather than by a call-up of Guardsmen and Reservists recognized the peculiar needs of the least orthodox conflict in which America ever has engaged. When America mobilizes its reserves, a shock wave goes across the Nation and around the World. In the current atmosphere, mobilization would constitute a form of escalation in itself, psychological as well as physical. The President obviously wanted to avoid the implications of such a step at the time his decision was made.

Moreover, it would have caused far more disruption in the civilian community and the economy than a buildup by draft. The draft of a few young men from each community has much less harmful impact than the removal of whole units which normally contain, in their membership, many of the civic and business leaders of an area.

Over and beyond these are solid military reasons for the procedure that was adopted. These can best be summarized, I believe, by saying that through the Army's Selected Reserve Force (and its Air Guard counterpart), we have been able to achieve a high level of combat-readiness in a sizeable force and to keep this powerful force intact as a critically important segment of the Nation's strategic reserve. The strategic reserve is our crucial margin of safety, should the Southeast Asia conflict spread or trouble arise elsewhere, and its Active elements had dwindled dangerously under the demands of South Viet Nam. Now, this dangerous gap has been closed through the labors of Guardsmen in the selected units, and behind them, a host of additional units stand ready to move up to a higher readiness plateau should future developments warrant such an acceleration.

Guardsmen in units assigned to the Selected Force have been compelled to undergo additional inconvenience and hardship in their strenuous efforts to achieve a high level of operational-readiness. It is not easy to blend such heavy training requirements with busy civilian lives, and they deserve the gratitude of their fellow Americans. Their sacrifice would have been even heavier, however, had they been mobilized last year, when such a move was under consideration.

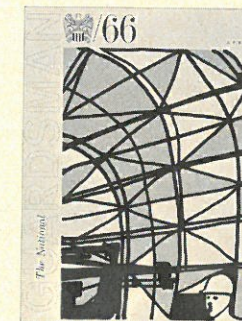
Meanwhile, the National Guard has been able to demonstrate once more, dramatically and effectively, its direct and important involvement in National defense, and Guardsmen themselves must grasp this ready-made opportunity to see that their involvement is more thoroughly understood. Not since the Berlin Crisis of 1961 has the atmosphere been more favorable for emphasizing the Guard's significance in National security, to the families and employers of Guardsmen and to Americans everywhere. ♦



# The National GUARDSMAN

April XX 4

## CONTENTS



A web of electronics guards the United States and gives it precious minutes of warning and reaction time.

- HOW MUCH DOES A MINUTE COST? 2**  
*Every minute counts when you're combating missile attacks; new over-the-horizon radars provide extra minutes for U.S. defenses.*
- DEFENSE PLANS FOR THE RESERVE FORCES 8**  
*Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara reveals his plans for use of the Reserve Forces in this report based upon his annual posture statement and press conference.*
- WHY NO CALL-UP? 12**  
*What's behind the decision not to mobilize the Reserve Forces?  
What are the provisions of law providing for mobilization?*
- ALASKA SCOUTS TRY NEW VENTURES 18**  
*The Alaska Scouts test a new organization and run their own kitchens.*
- MERCY FLIES A MILE HIGH 22**  
*A report of a typical mission of the Air Guard's busy Aeromedical Airlift Flights and Military Airlift Squadrons during a domestic aeromedical evacuation flight.*
- GOOD NEIGHBOR GUARDSMEN 26**  
*For the second straight year, West Virginia Air Commandos practice civic action in Panama.*

Official publication of the National Guard Association of the United States. Publication office: Telegraph Press Building, Harrisburg, Penna. Second class postage paid at Harrisburg, Penna. All correspondence should be addressed to 1 Massachusetts Ave. N. W., Washington, D. C. 20001. THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN welcomes original articles bearing on National Defense, with emphasis on the Army and Air National Guard. Manuscripts must be accompanied by return postage, and no responsibility is assumed for their safe handling. Domestic subscriptions for home delivery: \$2 per year. A year's subscription is included within NGAUS members' annual dues. Subscriptions to foreign addresses, \$2.50 per year. Single copies, 25¢. Copyright, 1966, National Guard Assn. of the U. S. All rights reserved.

APRIL, 1966

## STAFF

EDITOR / Col. Allan G. Crist

ASSOCIATE EDITOR / Maj. Corb Sarchet

ADVERTISING & CIRCULATION / Maj. John Bibb

ART DIRECTOR / Louis James Nolan