

The President's Page

TEN-SHUN, GEORGE DIXON!

IN YOUR syndicated "Washington Scene" column of June 20, you had occasion, in commenting on the proposed appointment of a chairman for the newly established Civilian Components Policy Board in the office of the Secretary of Defense, to advance certain unwarranted and untruthful statements concerning the National Guard. To refresh your memory, I quote the following:

"This will undoubtedly win me the undying enmity of Congressmen from a number of States, but their National Guards are a joke. Largely they are paper units or social clubs where members foregather occasionally to shoot pool or play pinochle . . . Justice Roberts, a vigorous proponent of Universal Military Training, will insist that all National Guard and Reserve outfits get back into fighting trim or be relegated to outer darkness . . ."

I am afraid, Mr. Dixon, that either you are unduly optimistic or are guilty of wishful thinking when you assume that members of Congress will favor you with their enmity for your brash statements concerning the National Guard. For truth to tell, our Congressmen are thoroughly familiar with the performance of the National Guard—in peace as well as in war—and unlike you, frequently visit National Guard installations and consider the state of training. It is much more likely that members of Congress, like members of the National Guard, felt only regret when they learned that a presumably reputable newspaperman, supposed to give his clientele reliable information, would, instead, be guilty of statements completely at variance with the truth.

It would have been much better, if before sounding off about the National Guard and Reserve, you had taken the trouble to familiarize yourself with the provisions in the National Defense Act for the governing of the National Guard and Reserve in time of peace and, at the same time, familiarized yourself with the "Approved War Department Policies" of 13 October 1945, affecting the National Guard of the United States and the Organized Reserve Corps pertaining to their postwar organization, training and missions.

Had you done so, you would not have made the statements. It is even more regrettable that you did not confer with the Departments of the Army and Air and the National Guard Bureau as to state of organization and training of the National Guard—past and present. Had you done so, you would have saved being embarrassed. At the same time, you might have checked with the Secretary of Defense concerning the appointment of a chairman for the Civilian Components Policy Board and you would have learned that Mr. Justice Roberts had not been

appointed and obviously had not agreed to come to Washington for that purpose. And while in a checking mood and by way of digression, may I point out that the proper terminology is "National Guard" and never "National Guards."

Harking back to the National Defense Act and the Approved War Department Policies, had you familiarized yourself with their provisions, you would have learned, perhaps to your surprise, that the National Guard is organized in precisely the same manner as the United States Army and the United States Air Force and in conformity with the same tables of organization. You would have found out, too, that the National Guard is required by Federal law to engage in 48 weekly assemblies or armory drills and participate in 15 days field training each year. Had you consulted with the proper agencies of the Defense Establishment, you would have learned also that the over-all strength of the National Guard is fixed at 682,000 under the Approved Policies. This strength is allocated to some 6,000 units, organized on the Army side into 27 infantry and armored divisions, 21 regimental combat teams, 200 AAA and 800 non-divisional units. On the Air side there are 514 units organized into 12 wings, 27 groups and 84 squadrons. For the fiscal year ending 30 June 1949, Congress authorized a strength of 341,000 for the National Guard of which 300,000 was Army and 41,000 was Air. When the fiscal year ended, the aggregate strength of the National Guard was in excess of 355,000 or 15,000 more than that authorized by Congress. This strength is contained in more than 5,100 units which have been organized and Federally recognized and there is no paper about it.

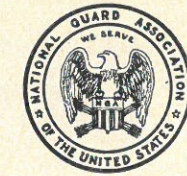
Despite this matter of record, you, Mr. Dixon, stated flatly that the National Guard is a paper organization. In light of the statistics, how can you contend that the National Guard is a "paper organization" and on what do you base your conclusions? Statistics are a bit boring, I know, but since you raised the issue let me point out further that during the fiscal year ending 30 June 1949, some 319,000 National Guardsmen attended 48 armory drills, and during the calendar year 1949 some 319,000 Guardsmen out of 355,000 will participate in the 15 days of field training.

Attendance at armory and field training is not haphazard by any means, since records are verified and certified by Regular Army and Air instructors assigned to supervise the training of every National unit. I assure you that they do not countenance either pool playing or pinochle on Uncle Sam's time.

The accomplishment of the States and the National Guard in postwar reorganization has been phe-

(Please turn to page 17)

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Dear Guardsmen;



"Mr. Belvedere" of the movies unquestionably is a genius, and so, too, it appears, is our M/Sgt. Bob Richardson. The Aurora, Ill., creator of our monthly "Phototoons" and of occasional cover illustrations heard about a Chicago newspaper-movie publicity contest for people who claimed the title of "genius" because they could do something better than anyone else—maybe it might be at making paper dolls, or whatever. Anyhow, Sergeant Bob, who juggles various duties in Hq., 1st Bn., 129th Inf., when he's not busy making a living or moulding clay caricatures, made up a scrapbook of "Phototoons" that have appeared in THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN. The contest judges came to the inescapable conclusion that that made him a genius, and awarded him a television set. The cuts show Sergeant Bob with his prize-winning display.

The period immediately following the close of hostilities is for the combat soldier, a special time. He's in a state of suspended animation. The explosive energy he must generate in action has to have an outlet and it's too soon to find the right escape valve. Instinctively, he turns to conversation. Combat men have their own forensic society. If you've never been in on a meeting, then by all means relax and read Harold Winerip's "Hot Sunday in Leyte." Winerip, a former newspaperman and now strictly a magazine writer, served 3½ years in the recent war. Most of his Army career centers around the 543d Engineer Boat and Shore Regt. He made two assault landings with the outfit in the Philippines—one at Lingayen Gulf in Luzon; the other at Zamboanga in Mindanao. He's contributed to a number of the nation's top magazines and we're glad to have him aboard.

The Staff

OUR COVER

Want a bridge built? Call the Engineers! Our cover shot shows a crew of North Dakota's 231st Engr. (C) Bn. throwing a ponton bridge across a waterway in the Wood Lake area. Only three of the men ever had done such a job before, but they completed the task in two hours and 15 minutes.

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