

AS WE SEE IT . . .



TO MEET THE CHALLENGE—"TAKE 6"

By Major General EDGAR C ERICKSON, Chief, National Guard Bureau

I AM on leave for a few days after spending three days attending the Defense Secretary's conference at Quantico, Virginia.

Although I have enjoyed fishing, swimming and just puttering around this old camp of mine, I haven't been able to get the conference and the presentations made there out of my mind.

I came away from Quantico with a realization that every effort of the Department of Defense and the Services must be directed towards having all forces ready on D-Day for anything that might happen. The worst that could happen would, of course, be a surprise attack on our forces all over the World, with an all-out air attack on the United States.

The Army and the Air Force have commitments not only to defend the Continental United States but to take part in defense activities all over the World. These commitments can only be met by having trained units in the Reserve Components of these Services, and that means Army and Air National Guard units, ready for combat service in as short a period of time after mobilization as possible.

The National Guard is now challenged as never before in its long and glorious history to produce units that are not going to require a reshuffling of personnel upon mobilization, because of lack of basic training of individual members. National Guard units can meet this challenge by making an all-out effort to enlist men with prior military service and induce all non-prior service men who have enlisted or who enlist in the future between the ages of 17 and 18½ to volunteer for the basic training programs of the appropriate Service. While this is equally important to the Army and Air units, the problem of the Army in this respect is by far the greater.

The Department of the Army is deeply concerned over the fact that such a large percentage of our enlisted men have not had the equivalent of the four months

of basic training required by law before a man may be shipped overseas. The National Guard is now being unfavorably judged, to a greater extent than our Unit Commanders realize, upon the number of enlisted men who have not had four months or more of active duty with the Army.

The Army made the six-months basic training program, set up to implement the Reserve Forces Act of 1955, available to enlisted men of the National Guard who volunteer for this training. We have more than 100,000 enlisted men under the age of 20 already in the National Guard who are eligible for this training. One of our big jobs, as I see it, is to convince the maximum number of these men that it is in their best interest to volunteer for the six-months training program conducted by the Army.

I am confident that if every Unit Commander had been at Quantico and heard Mr Brucker, Mr Quarles, Admiral Radford, General Taylor and General White, they would have realized, as I did, that speeding up training in all units of the National Guard is now urgent. In my opinion our officers would have been impressed with the fact that completion of basic training by all individuals during the first year of service in the National Guard is now a real necessity.

Surely every Unit Commander must realize that with the necessity of conducting basic training for recruits eliminated from the program, his company could devote all of its time to carrying on the more interesting phases of unit and other training which would make the unit really ready.

There are also a great many advantages to be gained by the individual Guardsmen who take this training. Most of these are outlined in the recent booklet published by the National Guard Bureau entitled "TAKE SIX."

I look upon the enlisted men who complete the six-months training course as the future non-commissioned officers of the National Guard.

As I see it, the future of the National Guard as a first line of defense component is at stake because the Army will not consider a reserve unit as really ready unless all of its members have had at least six months of active duty for training.

It is my opinion that unless we get a very large number to take this training on a voluntary basis during Fiscal Year 1957, we will find it made a condition of enlistment in the National Guard of the United States in Fiscal Year 1958.

Consequently I have come to the conclusion that the most important part of my job during this, my last, year as Chief of the National Guard Bureau will be to convince all State Adjutants General and the commanders of all units from divisions to detachments that they should promote the Army's six-months training program during Fiscal Year 1957.



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dear guardsmen:

The months and the years slip, sneak and skid by so fast in the press of keeping pace with day-to-day events and trying to get a little ahead of them, that we missed spotting a milestone in the National Guard's development.

It wasn't until the Dept of Defense came out with a news release calling attention to the event, that we realized that 30 Jun 56 marked the tenth anniversary of the Guard's post-WW II reorganization.

It was on 30 Jun 46—less than a year after the shooting had stopped—that Colorado's 120 Ftr Sq was Federally recognized, the first of what have grown into nearly 6,000 units in the Continental US and across the oceans.

That seems only days ago. But between times, in addition to enormous growth, we have seen the development of a new, separate Air National Guard that nevertheless has inherited the distinctiveness of the centuries-old National Guard from which it sprung. We have seen a Korean War dissipate much of the National Guard and practically all of the Air Guard, and then their return and resumption of growth to new heights. We have seen major changes in organization, equipment, the assumption of around-the-clock defense missions. Now we are seeing the development of new approaches to stepping-up the pace of training.

From the standpoint of THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN, we have not only been witness to but participant in that growth. There's never been a dull moment, and we wouldn't have missed it for worlds. May the Guard's second postwar decade be as vigorous, exciting, and rewarding as its first!

THE STAFF

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our cover

An Airman never may have to swing across a stream by rope—but then again, he might. In the process of a weekend's basic Infantry training, Airman Guillaume slipped spectacularly, to the delight of buddies of Sioux City, Iowa's, 174 Ftr-Intcp Sq.