

as we see it...

SOMEBODY GOOFED

CUTS ARE BEING made in all of the Armed Forces, to keep within not only appropriations but expenditure ceilings—to keep from busting through the National debt limit.

Whether the basic policy is right or wrong is a matter of grave concern and hard debate. That matter, we won't argue right now.

Ideally, when the Active Forces are reduced, the Army National Guard, the Air National Guard, and other Civilian Components should be built-up. That would go far towards compensating for the diminished active strength, and still save money. But it doesn't work that way when the Country's in an "economy" mood.

Being realistic, we know that the Air Force—like its sister Services—has to trim back. It has to weigh its "force requirements," both for the Regular AF and the Air Guard and AFRes, against the money it has. So, we're not surprised at belt-tightening, painful though it be.

Within its own Establishment, the AF inactivates some units, puts some installations on standby basis. Individuals are reassigned somewhere within the vast, World-wide organization. That works individual hardships, but as Careerists, they are—or should be—prepared to accept that as part of their profession. It doesn't work that way for citizen-soldiers or airmen: they're tied to their home town.

A matter of weeks ago, Hq USAF directed that certain ANG and AFRes units be inactivated. There was no advance notice. Members of the units learned about it by reading their newspapers. All of a sudden, outfits which many had spent years in building, were to be wiped out like the snuffing of a candle. If there happened to be another ANG outfit nearby into which an individual could be fitted, ok; if not, maybe he could find a slot in the AFRes; if no AFRes—too bad, chum, you can be a fulltime civilian again. Fulltime Technicians—most with an experience level the Active AF envies—could look for non-military jobs. Hangars, shops, Hq installations, on which great sums of money had been spent, would lie vacant, eventually perhaps be diverted to non-military use.

Long, long ago, the National Guard—before there was an Air National Guard—realized what could happen if the Army tried to play the same game of musical chairs with Guard units as it is prone to do with its own: activate, deactivate, change station of units and personnel. Congress enacted into a law a provision (now in subsection (c) of Sec 104, Title 32, US Code) which states:

“... no change in the branch, organization, or allotment of a unit located entirely within a State may be made without the approval of its governor.”

In Hq, USAF, somebody goofed. The law was disregarded. No one consulted any Governor. The flat directive was issued: inactivate these units.

Illinois' Gov William G Stratton denounced this "willful disregard and disrespect of the law" by a Fed agency; characterized it as an "ill-conceived, illegal and arbitrary action." Said he: "... if the Governors of the States permit it to go unchallenged then those in power in the Pentagon will be in a position to eliminate any unit, Army or Air, in any State . . ."

The NGAUS' 79th General Conference condemned the action in similar terms and shot its protest to AF Secy James H Douglas. Governors and Adjutants General of States not immediately affected by this particular order informed Mr Douglas of their concern over the law's violation and the basic principle involved.

It's an important principle to be kept in mind and to be observed rigidly.

The lack of such a safeguard, and the consequent ability of the Army and the Air Force to play checkers with USAR and USAFRes units, are primary reasons why those two components have been, are, and will be "sick" and struggling. In them, an outfit no sooner gets going moderately well than a reorganization hits it. The Army Res had Abn and Armd Divs—it lost them. It had many Inf Divs; it has few. The AFRes was loaded with fighter and bomber outfits; it has none. There have been provisional units galore, under one name or another. "Capital R" Reservists have been alternately eager, disappointed, confident, confused. They don't know where they're at—because the Brains keep changing the signals.

So, it's a good thing we of the Guard have had that little provision of law in our favor. Up to now, it's been observed.

That's not to say that we haven't undergone changes, or that we won't experience more. We've had units reorganized, redesignated, converted to meet changing requirements and changing TOs; we'll have more. We've lost units—all without Governors kicking up a storm. Governors and Adjutants General are reasonable people, and when a requirement has been explained, it has been accepted. That very well might have been the case in this recent instance.

The Guard, therefore, has a stability—a permanence without inflexibility. Its members have known where they're going. All because—up to now—the Services have been smart enough to clue us into developments. We trust that this recent breach of that principle will be the last. If it is, we'll be able to get along. If not, there's going to be hell to pay.

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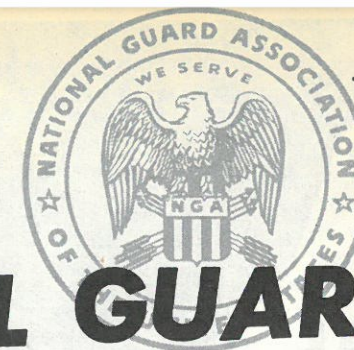
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ARLENE HIGGINS	INSIDE BACK COVER

DEAR GUARDSMEN: There's a pile of "dead" magazines, and several drawers full of "dead" address stencils, in our Circulation Dept. They represent hundreds of NGAUS members, and other subscribers. Eventually, we will get letters from many of them, wanting to know why they haven't seen a "NATIONAL GUARDSMAN" in months.

Then, and only then, we'll be able to get those particular ones back into the "live" files.

Here's what happens. Address lists for this issue are sent to the printing plant a month before the magazines reach subscribers. The subscriber has moved meantime; if he bothered to send us an address change notice at all, it got here too late to catch this issue. We made the change, effective with the next issue; meantime, one edition has gone, bearing the old address. His mailman will write the new address on the envelope (if he has the new address), or "Moved—left no address," and take it back to the Post Office. Eventually—and it may be months—it will come back to us. Then we'll have to "G2" where the subscriber really is.

To insure regular delivery, notify us at least one month—preferably two months—before you move. Give us your old address as well as your new one.

THE STAFF

OUR COVER: You can "read" volumes of history in this clever photo-montage by MSgt Howard Belles: the "Minuteman" at Concord, ancestor of all National Guardsmen; today's "Minutemen" acro-team of the Colorado Air National Guard, symbolic of the Guard in the jet age.

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