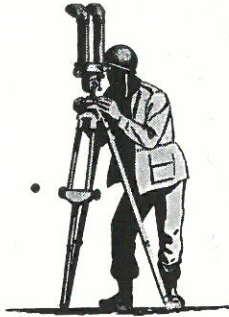


AS WE SEE IT



MUSTER DAY: A TIME FOR STOCK-TAKING

ON 22 February, birthday of the Nation's most revered citizen-soldier, the National Guard again will observe its annual Muster Day.

In George Washington's time, it was a day for "counting heads," a day set aside by law on which every able-bodied man would report to the village green, with musket, for a physical assessment of a locality's means of defense.

Today, Muster Day is merely a gesture to the past, recently revived as a symbol to focus American's attention on the Guardsman's undiminished importance in the defense of the land.

But today, no less than in the past, Muster Day also offers Guardsmen an appropriate occasion for stock-taking.

Since Korea, Guardsmen have exerted prodigious effort to pull together its war-scattered segments and rebuild them into an even better organization.

The Air Guard has evolved into an aerial legion whose ability approaches that of the Air Force itself. Every unit now is flying jets. Planes and crews are on "runway alert" at 20 airfields across the Country, ready day and night to meet an enemy threat. Aircraft Control & Warning Squadrons are on round-the-clock duty in some key localities and already have earned their keep in rescue operations. Air defense of Hawaii, one of America's most vital outposts, is almost entirely in Air Guard hands, and Army Guardsmen will take on a key role there soon when they move onto new NIKE HERCULES sites on the Islands.

The Army Guard has schooled itself in the latest nuclear and missile-age tactical concepts and the process of education is still going on. Within a short time, it will have completed its conversion to the newest Pentomic organizational structure. More than 80% of the ARNG's nearly 400,000 men are now basically trained and qualified in their military specialties and all training is being conducted on the unit level. Soon too, on NIKE sites all over the Country, Army Guardsmen will carry a large share of responsibility for defense against aerial attack, another 24-hour-a-day mission never entrusted to part-time soldiers until after the Korean war. In brief, the ARNG has boosted itself much closer to Active Army professional capabilities than many of its detractors will admit!

The Guard has accomplished all these things despite a discouraging procession of obstacles, and that in itself is added evidence that it never will settle for second-best!

There have been the time-consuming harassments of demobilization, reactivation recruiting and training, always a deterrent to military proficiency and always an aftermath of war for the Guard. There also have been struggles, shared with the Active Forces, to adapt tactical doctrines to new and terrible weapons and to revolutionary new means of transport. More deplorable in Guard eyes have been the intra-family harassments, the never-ending series

of attacks by a small but persistent group of Guard-haters within the Pentagon itself. Thus, while laboring to rebuild itself from the ground up, the Guard has been compelled to fight an almost continuous rearguard action against arbitrary strength cuts, absorption into the anonymity of a huge conglomerate "reserve," and drastic downgrading as the Nation's most efficient, self-supporting reserve elements.

It can be another source of pride for Guardsmen, though, that we have not limited ourselves to a narrow fight for survival but concurrently have striven for long-range policies which would give the reserve components stability and continuity, qualities so sadly lacking in the past. In those debates, in the Pentagon and in the halls of Congress, we frequently have found ourselves opposed to the Regular Services. More often than not, we have won our point and the standard explanation has become a disparaging reference to the Guard's strong community ties and consequent "political power." But time and again, events have shown that we won for the simplest reason of all—because we were right!

Because we were right, the validity of our ideas was obvious to objective minds. Because our views on reserve affairs so often were accepted, America today is better able to resist the encroachments of a hostile ideology.

We must continue to be right. Guardsmen can't sit in the sun like old soldiers and brag about the "old outfit"—not in this age of \$40,000,000,000, 3000-mph defense! We are entitled to look on our past with pride—but only if that pride strengthens our determination to meet the needs of today!

The current reorganization must be undertaken with the same enthusiasm that always marks Guard efforts.

Training methods must be improved still further. By what Gen Bruce Clarke, ConARC Commander, calls "integrated" and "bloc" training, we must cram three hours of combat-slanted learning into every hour of training.

Operational readiness standards must be met. If and when the whistle blows again, it will be too late to go back to PRI!

We must not let past disputes with the Regular Services create barriers of bitterness. It takes no clairvoyance to see further opportunities for discord in the immediate future, as Congress, the Administration, the Armed Services and the American people debate defense needs—and costs. Indeed, the debate already has started and the Guard cannot hold itself aloof—not if it expects to retain the vitality and independence which have contributed so heavily to its effectiveness as a first-line force. We must speak out with force and honesty, but with intelligent understanding of the Country's total defense requirements. Our words will be heard, and heeded, if we're right!

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DEAR GUARDSMEN: We're pleased with our pioneer attempt at prying-loose old military books to help fill-out the extensive library shelving in the National Guard Assn's Memorial Building, which is nearing completion and occupancy.

Last November we figuratively passed the hat for book donations, and received some nice contributions. From Col Gus Johnson, through Massachusetts' 101 FA Bn, came copies of "The 101st Field Artillery" and "War Diary." From Col Ross H Routh, US P & FO for Oklahoma, came the famed Bill Mauldin's "Sicily Sketch Book" and "Mud, Mules, and Mountains." And from Maryland's veteran Adj Gen Milton A Reckord came the very rare printed Official Proceedings of the memorable National Guard Assn General Conferences of 1903—year of the "Dick Act" which marked birth of the modern National Guard—and 1904.

We're sure there are lots of other books stashed-away, gathering dust, in armories, attics, garages, and basements. Few, if any, may have made "best seller" lists in their day. Titles and content may appear dull to the average reader. There may be old copies of long-gone National Guard magazines published at State or even unit level. There may be unit diaries and unit histories. Whatever the subject matter, if they contribute *anything* to US military history, they'll be welcome acquisitions to our reference library.—AGC.

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