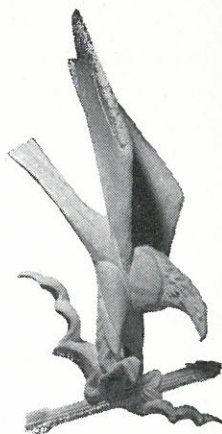




AS WE SEE IT

"A REPUTATION OF WEAKNESS"



"There is a rank due to these United States among nations, which will be withheld, if not absolutely lost, by the reputation of weakness. If we desire to avoid insult, we must be able to repel it; if we desire to secure peace, one of the most powerful instruments of our rising prosperity, it must be known, that we are at all times ready for war."

—President George Washington, to Congress, 3 Dec 1793

IT'S a good idea for Americans generally and National Guardsmen particularly to read, re-read, and act upon those words of one of the first and certainly among the most illustrious National Guardsmen.

George Washington, onetime Lieutenant Colonel of Virginia Militia and later Commander-in-Chief of the victorious Colonial forces, was concerned by a postwar public apathy toward defense. With their newly-won freedom, Americans saw no danger of war with any foreign power, were letting their Army dwindle to the vanishing point (80 officers and men at lowest ebb). Such weakness was to invite insult by Barbary pirates and bring on a second war with the British.

Comparable apathy in this Century deluded Germany twice and Japan once into taking a calculated risk that the US wouldn't fight.

Weakness again in 1950 invited the North Koreans to shame a mighty Nation and wreck the lives of thousands of US fighting men.

Have we learned from these lessons? Have we today the reputation of strength—or of weakness? Does Khrushchev stand in awe of our military power—or does he contemptuously dismiss our capability? Alternately, he brandishes the club—boasts of Sputnik and Lunik, of mighty nuclear missiles rolling off his production lines; then waves the carrot—a phony offer of disarmament, a supposed reduction in his Army—safely backed-up by the accumulation of millions of men in reserve forces and with up-to-the-minute weapons.

How do we stack-up in comparison? We lag in the field of space. We have but token production of military missiles. We cancel or stretch-out the manufacture of modernized ships, subs, planes, guns and the intricate tools required for waging modern war. To our eternal shame, we man so-called "US Army" Divisions in Korea predominantly with Korean enlisted men.

This month, the National Guard again will mark Washington's Birthday with "Muster Day" observances across the Nation. The Guard will show what it is contributing toward our Nation's defense. It has much to show—much to be proud of, in terms of patriotic service, higher levels of training and of combat readiness insofar as its men are concerned. But behind the public display lies a material weakness that should cause grave concern.

Reminiscent of the coal truck "tanks" and stovepipe "mortars" of 1941 is the shocking situation that prevails—the utter lack of "HONEST JOHN" missiles, or modern tanks, of the new family of rifles and machine guns; the dearth of armored personnel carriers, and self-propelled artillery, and of radars and the communications gear required to make the "Pen-tomic" concept work. The Active Army suffers many of the same shortages and must "make do" in the same manner with WW II vintage arms and equipment.

High policy lies behind the fact that we are far from being, as Washington urged, "at all times ready for war." A Budget "line" must be held. In the face of mushrooming population, unprecedented prosperity, a growing gross National product, the Dollar is considered of far greater value than Defense.

We, or the Guardsmen who step into our shoes, are the ones whose lives will be laid on the line if Khrushchev's mercurial mood turns from sunny to sour, or if something sparks another Korea. We have not only a right but a duty to demand 1960-model weapons for all components, for a 1960-model war.

Guardsmen therefore not only should but must join in opening their friends' and neighbors' eyes to the dangers we face and the needs that must be satisfied "if we desire to secure peace, one of the most powerful instruments of our rising prosperity." ♦



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DEAR GUARDSMEN: With this issue, we introduce to Florida members of the NGAUS, and other Florida subscribers, their own special "Florida Edition" of THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN.

Like their comrades in Alabama, Massachusetts and New York, they will receive the same monthly magazine as all other subscribers, but with an "extra": a center-section spread reserved exclusively for news and pictures dealing with activities of their own people and units, selected and prepared by their own "State Editor."

The "Florida Edition" replaces a newsprint, tabloid-size monthly formerly published and distributed within the State. The change to the new format integrates it into THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN's pages and distribution system, cutting out the duplicated time, effort and cost of separate mailing, while maintaining the "State Editor's" choice of material for publication.

Perhaps other States may see the desirability of the "two-magazines-for-one" approach to giving their Guardsmen a fill-in on what's going on at both the National and State levels—an application of the principle that the soldier who knows what's cookin' (and why) is a better soldier. —AGC

OUR COVER: Told to capture the spirit of "Your National Guard—America's Up-To-The-Minute Men," in a Muster Day poster, Artist Lou Nolan came up with the alert-looking Guardsman who mans many of the Nation's missile sites. Nolan's striking portrayal of a modern Guardsman will be seen on Post Office trucks throughout February as a tribute to the Army and Air Guard.

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