

The President's Page

A NEW YEAR DAWNS

SCARCELY had the December Issue of THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN reached my desk before the writer was confronted with the fact that the deadline for the January 1952 Number was just around the corner. It suddenly dawned on us that by the time the January Number reached our thousands of subscribers scattered throughout the world in the active military service of the United States, a new year would have been ushered in.

The New Year will find approximately 126,000 of our Army National Guard and 50,000 of our Air National Guard either in or alerted for active Federal service. Hundreds of our units are scattered throughout the world with many of them fighting in Korea; some are in Japan, some in western Europe, some in Alaska and some still in the continental United States.

Here at Headquarters, insofar as humanly possible, we have tried to keep in touch with our far-flung outfits so that through the columns of THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN we may give our readers first-hand news of what is happening to them. If we, seemingly, overlook an outfit, the probabilities are that we either have been unable to contact it or else the PIO thereof has failed to send us material.

About a month or so ago, the writer was afforded the opportunity of visiting the 47th Infantry Division at Camp Rucker and was accorded the great privilege by Maj. Gen. Norman E. Hendrickson, the Commanding General, of reviewing the division and it was indeed magnificent. It gave the writer a great thrill to see his old company and old regiment swing by to the strains of the old Regimental March, "The Glory of the Trumpets." Reports received here at Headquarters disclosed that in the final reviews of the 43d and 28th on the eve of their departure for Germany they too presented a splendid appearance.

While flying over the seas has become quite routine, nevertheless, there is something dramatic in the flight of a Combat Wing across the ocean, and it was with pride that we watched the flight across the Atlantic of the 126th Light Bomb Wing of Illinois and Missouri under the command of Brig. Gen. Frank Allen, from Langley Field to Bordeaux. It was a great performance and we extend our congratulations to the commander and personnel of the Wing.

As 1951 draws to a close, with the dawn of new year in the offing, we cannot help but view in retrospect the old year with all of its uncertainties, disillusionments and problems and speculate as to what 1952 will have in store. Based on recent utterances by the Chief of Staff of the Army, it seems almost certain that an additional Guard Division will be alerted for active Federal service. Whether it will be an Infantry or an Armored division, it, together with the 37th and 44th, will not only be a replica of those fine divisional and nondivisional units which have gone before but will reflect great credit on the Guard as a whole and the State from whence it came in particular. It would seem quite likely, in view of past events, that our remaining five Air National Guard Combat Wings soon will be alerted and they too will be scattered.

The performance of all of our units has been outstanding and they have made a great contribution to the Nation's security at a most critical time. We are grateful indeed to the Aeronautics Subcommittee of the American Legion National Security Commission for the very fine tribute which it paid to our Air National Guard in its report to the 33d Annual Convention of the American Legion at Miami in October of 1951 and which appeared in the December Number of THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN.

Without being unduly pessimistic, we may take for granted that even as 1950 and 1951 brought to the several States, Territories and the District of Columbia and the Guard thereof a host of problems, some of which are still with us, 1952 will prove to be no exception. It is fortunate that our 73d General Conference lies behind us and that the Executive Council, the Committee on Policy and the Chairmen of the Standing and Special Committees of the National Guard Association will meet in Washington 7-8 Jan. to consider a multitude of problems and solve them, if solved they can be. Unquestionably, there will be many imponderables, and one of the great imponderables will be the matter of whether there will be established by the 2d session of the 82d Congress a system of universal military training and service and, if so, how will it be fitted into the National Guard or vice-versa. Already, the Hon. Carl Vinson, Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, has served notice that he will open hearings 9 Jan. on the UMT&S plan submitted by the National Security Training Commission. The National Guard has much at stake in any plan pertaining to UMT&S, and if the Guard is to continue to maintain the huge Troop Basis which has been allotted, then if such a system is established a method must be devised whereby the trainees thereof can be assigned or transferred to the National Guard of the several States, Territories and the District of Columbia.

We are hopeful, too, that before 1952 has passed there will be enacted by the Congress "The Armed Forces Reserve Act of 1951," a Promotion System for the Reserve Components, and an Equalization of Benefits measure for all Reserve personnel. There are, of course, many other important legislative matters acted upon by the recent General Conference and they will be processed in due course by the Standing Committee on Legislation.

Before the space allotted to the writer has been exhausted, through the columns of THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN, I wish to our far-flung outfits and colleagues, all of the joys of the season and a far happier and more prosperous New Year than the one which is now passing, and that ere 1952 has joined the endless processions of the years there will be some semblance of the dawn of peace and a better understanding among the Nations of the World and the people thereof.

E. A. Walsh

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Dear Guardsmen;

Neither an avid fan nor, customarily, a movie reviewer, we recently had the rare occasion to pick two shows within three days and, because of their military nature we're impelled to remark about them briefly.

One was "Fixed Bayonets," the story of a single platoon's delaying action in the bitter Korean retreat of last year.

The other was "The Red Badge of Courage," film version of Stephen Crane's powerful and imaginative story of the Civil War.

Separated in time by nearly a century, and in place by thousands of miles, the two pictures nevertheless come remarkably close together in their portrayals of human frailties, fears—and guts.

It is strange to see a winner of the Congressional Medal of Honor, National Guardsman Audie Murphy, portray the role of a panic-stricken Federal soldier in his first battle. But Audie carries the part ably, as does famed "Willie and Joe" Cartoonist Bill Mauldin, an ex-Guardsman, in his role of another blue-clad who "skedaddled, too."

These two suffered physical fear—the fear of a charging line of Men in Grey in a day when the withholding of fire until whites-of-eyes range was closed, was an intensely practical matter.

It was another kind of fear that encompassed the Corporal who wanted to be busted, in "Fixed Bayonets." He had the guts that would carry him in eggshell-treading steps across a highly lethal minefield to rescue his wounded platoon sergeant. But he lacked—or thought he lacked—the guts to issue orders that conceivably meant life or death to his own men.

To the young Guardsman particularly, who has not known at first hand the nature of war, we commend both films. It wouldn't hurt veterans to see them, too.

The Staff

ON OUR COVER

Field training is rugged for the fledgling Alaska National Guard. Winter-time is vacation-time for these Far Northerners, and conditions under which they train are exemplified by the cover photo showing four men of the 208th Inf. Bn. (Sep.) advancing over the treacherous ice of Mendenhall Glacier. (Army Photo: Cpl. John Mann)

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