


The President's Page



THE RESERVES

THE Pentagon has issued a reminder that the Armed Forces Reserve act—which represents the best that the Congress was able to do last spring with one of the larger, if vaguer, problems of military policy—will go into effect on Jan. 1. The act is an outgrowth of the somewhat ill-fated Universal Training act of 1951, which failed to bring a universal training system into being but which did impose on every man drafted into the armed forces a total military obligation lasting over a period of eight years.

Every inductee, after completing his two years of active service, must now remain in the reserve for a further six years. But this provision raised the embarrassing fact that we have no rounded, consistent and effective reserve system to receive him. Congress toiled mightily through the last session collating and rewriting a vast mass of legislation regarding the reserves and the National Guard, mixing in bits and pieces from the U.M.T. idea and other sources, to produce an act which would make good this deficiency. We now have a "compulsory" reserve system, of a sort; and it is this which will go into operation next month.

To most students of the subject it is a pretty feeble makeshift. The problem was not simply to add a lot more names to the filing-case army but to get more of their owners into the at least partially equipped and mobilizable "drilling" units of the National Guard and of some Organized Reserve formations. To this end Congress divided the paper forces into a "ready reserve," subject to call in any national emergency, and a "stand-by reserve," subject to call only in event of a war declared by Congress. On finishing his two years' active duty the soldier goes into the first. If he then joins the National Guard or other "drilling" unit he can get into the second after three more years; if, however, he prefers to abandon soldiering altogether he remains in the "ready" reserve (undrilled, unequipped and of course quite unready for combat, but nevertheless subject to emergency call) to the end of his eight-year term.

That this "incentive" is going to bring flocks of ex-soldiers into the National Guard armories, few believe. The truth is that the new reserve act neither provides for an effectively mobilizable reserve nor relieves the drafted man from the obligations now imposed upon him. It is largely a sham system. And so our reserve system will certainly remain until Congress has the courage really to face up to the problem of the military obligation in a democratic society.

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dear guardsmen:

Styles change, not only in clothing, automobile design, furniture and the like, but in the form of presenting the written word. Virtually every publication has its own "style," like, for instance, spelling the word "freight" as "frate." We're not going for that, but, since our readership is very largely military, we are inclining more to the military style of abbreviation in the interest of easier reading and space saving.

We could compile, if we took the time, some possibly interesting but quite useless statistics on the amount of energy and space that are wasted in sticking periods in every abbreviation. Anyhow, we're going to save both by going in for things like changing "Hq. & Hq. & Sv. Co., 0000th Engr. (C) Bn." to "Hq & Hq & Sv Co, 0000th Engr. (C) Bn." We're in mid-stream so far as the current issue is concerned; switch to the new style should be complete by next month.

While we're about it, we might note that in the reams of copy that pour into us from all directions appear some weird but hardly wonderful versions of what the authors consider to be correct military abbreviations. "Headquarters," for instance, is capable of infinite variation; we get "Hdqrs," Hqrs," Hqs" and "Hq," among others—the last-named, incidentally, being the only correct one.

One principle of military abbreviations is that the same abbreviation can't be used for two different words; thus, "Med" is the "short" only for "Medical" and not for "Medium;" the latter's official abbreviation is simply the letter "M."

Our source and guide: SR 320-50-1, Military Terms, Abbreviations and Symbols.

THE STAFF

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our cover

In perfect formation, ANG pilots of Maryland's 104th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron fly on a practice mission during their field training at Reading, Penna. in preparation for the M-Day role Air National Guardsmen will be called upon to play.