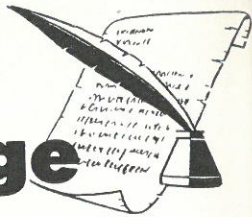


# The President's Page



## CHICKENS COME HOME TO ROOST

WHEN hearings were under way before the Senate Armed Services Committee, 82nd Congress, on H. R. 5426, which later became the Armed Forces Reserve Act, the National Guard Association urged that enactment be deferred for further consideration. The Association took the position that it could not be a party to enactment of legislation which would impose upon veterans who already had been in jeopardy at least once, the major burden of the Nation's security, while thousands managed to evade any military service whatsoever. The Association also contended that a military obligation of eight years, of which two would be in active service and six in a Reserve Component, was much too long and would be utterly unenforceable.

Proponents of the measure contended that it would be a Magna Charta for the Reserves. Here again, this Association took a contrary view, and the passage of time certainly has justified that position.

It was not surprising, therefore, that this organization gave more than passing attention to recent published articles to the effect that the Department of Defense is engaged in a study concerned with cutting very substantially the reserve service obligation. Apparently, the study would make it possible for an individual to decrease his time in the Ready Reserve by service not to exceed three years (instead of the six now required) with a National Guard unit or in an active unit of any other Reserve Component. Then, his remaining three-year service obligation would be satisfied in the less vulnerable Standby Reserve.

As an alternative, the Department has under consideration a plan which would provide that one who has completed the required two years of active Federal service and three years in an active unit of a Reserve Component, would be relieved of all further service obligation. Thus, a man could discharge his total obligation in five years instead of eight.

This Association, at the time the UMT&S and the Armed Forces Reserve bills were under consideration, not only advocated such a setup, but submitted amendments to accomplish this purpose. These amendments were opposed by the Department of Defense and rejected by the Armed Services Committees; thus, seemingly, the chickens are coming home to roost. Since last October, the Executive Council, the Committee on Legislation, and a Special Technical Committee of this Association have been engaged in drafting proposed legislation which embodies the principle set forth above.

It also appears that the legislative program of the Department of Defense contains a proposal to submit to Congress an amendment to Section 6 (c) (2) (A) of the UMT&S Act, so as to authorize the Secretaries of the Armed Forces to issue proclamations to maintain the strength of active units of the Reserve Components. This would be in the same manner that Governors issue proclamations whereby, to maintain strength of National Guard units, volunteers from the 17-18½-year category are deferred from induction so long as they serve satisfactorily in the Guard. This proposal is, indeed, most amazing, for just a month ago the Department of Defense was, and apparently still is, considering making an administrative determination that

sufficient trained manpower is available to maintain the Guard, which determination would have given the coup de grace to the National Guard.

The question arises as to the whereabouts of some 2,000,000 men who have been or will be released from service after two years of active duty, with a six-year reserve service obligation. The Armed Forces Reserve Act explicitly provides that all individuals upon release from active Federal service will become automatically members of the Ready Reserve and available for assignments to units of a Reserve Component other than the Guard. The only way the Guard can obtain any of such personnel is through voluntary enlistment, and precious few in this category are enlisting. Thus, the Guard must rely, in the main, upon the enlistment of those in the 17-18½-year age bracket. Now, it appears that the Department would tap this source in order to maintain the unit strength of other Reserve Components, reducing accordingly the manpower potential of the Guard. The proposal cannot be defended and is incomprehensible in view of the foregoing, and still more so in view of the proposed reduction in the strength of the active Armed Forces and curtailment of monthly draft quotas by approximately fifty percent.

Something is radically wrong with the manpower picture, for it cannot be contended one week that sufficient manpower is available to maintain the strength of the National Guard, and the next week contend that it is necessary to tap the 17-18½-year-old category in order to maintain the unit strength of other Reserve Components. Reserve Components of the Armed Forces, other than the National Guard, have a manpower potential of approximately 2,000,000 trained Returnees. There exists no earthly reason why the Reserve Components cannot be maintained at any strength determined by Congress, except for the reason that such Returnees with a six-year reserve obligation are paying no attention whatsoever thereto. Furthermore, they are paying no attention to the matter of arbitrary assignments to Reserve units, for the simple reason that no such assignments are being made.

The mere fact that the Department of Defense is even considering such legislation is clearly indicative that the glittering promises held forth in connection with the Armed Forces Reserve Act are not materializing. Therefore, the whole concept is utterly vain, and any thought that a reserve service obligation can be enforced is a delusion.

There are no conclusions possible, save that the provisions of the UMT&S Act and the Armed Forces Reserve Act, as they relate to a reserve service obligation, are utterly unenforceable, as this Association contended would be the case; and, that those in authority are not going to enforce these obligations any more than the comparable obligations imposed by the Selective Service and Training Act of 1941 were enforced. There is, of course, an alternative, but we will venture the observation that the alternative will prove to be even more unpalatable than the continuance of the present unsatisfactory state of affairs.

*E. Walsh*

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### dear guardsmen:

We were musing the other day about the various things that come under the heading, "Why editors get gray." There's that inevitable working against deadlines, of course. The business of fidgeting on pins and needles for a promised story that never comes—or arrives just after the presses begin rolling. High up, too, in the list of frustrations is that last-minute copy from the field with incomplete information when we're too near the zero-hour for checking. Garbled, indecipherable hand-written stories, or poorly typed copy.

But the last straw is gobbledegook. You've all seen gobbledegook, sometimes termed bafflegab, more politely referred to as "Federalese." Your minds have been weighted with it when you've plowed through long, wordy official reports—reports that could have been more easily understood had they been written in the King's (pardon us!) the President's English.

As an example, we are reminded of the verbose professor who called to a passing motorist: "I say, your tubular air container has lost its rotundity." It meant nothing to the driver until a small boy, sensing the situation, quickly translated: "Hey, Mister, you got a flat!"

The bureaucratic application of the same style is the direction to "obfuscate the illumination" when the air raid siren goes. "Turn out the lights" is what the man meant.

You're going to catch the Editor's eyes that much faster, and better your unit's chances of getting into print, if you'll analyze your copy to see whether it's as likely to interest other outfits, a thousand miles away, as much as your own gang; (2) shoot it to us promptly, while it's fresh; (3) write it in plain, simple language; (4) include all the essential elements: Who, What, Where, When, and How; (5) check back on your copy to make sure it's clear, and that names and grades are spelled correctly.

THE STAFF

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### our cover

In constant readiness to repel any air attack against Duluth's vital iron ore area, 90mm crewmen of Minnesota's National Guard practice along the Lake Superior shore. Assigned a major role in a developing Defense Dept protective network along America's Northern ramparts, "Gopher State" AAA units will man permanent gunsites as safeguards against crippling blows to industry within the range of intercontinental bombers.