

AS WE SEE IT . . .



CORE OF THE NATIONAL GUARD

A FEW months ago, we reported two moves—one through Congress and the other underground—to emasculate the National Guard Bureau; emasculate it to a point where it would be powerless to effectively represent the National Guard's viewpoint and interests.

Acknowledged or denied, the immediate objective appeared to be "insulation" of the NGB from operational control of the activities it wisely was created to handle.

As evidenced from these efforts, it is apparent that many in the Pentagon hierarchy, and for that matter, many Guardsmen themselves, do not quite understand just what the NGB is or what it does.

To understand fully the need for the NGB, as it stands today, one must explore the events leading to its establishment.

The National Guard traces its origin, in the form of Militia, back to the 17th Century. The Constitution and Bill of Rights made specific provision for its continuation as a military force, when the Federal Government was established in 1792. It was, however, under complete State control and supported almost entirely by the States until Congressional enactment of the Dick Bill in 1903 when the Federal Government assumed to a greater degree responsibility for its training, equipment and pay.

For some years, the then-called Organized Militia's affairs were handled by the several departments of the Army—corresponding to the Army Areas and Numbered Air Forces—and by the various staff sections of the War Dept, with little or no central coordination or direction. It was a matter of each State taking up its problems direct with a dept chief or a staff section. And each tended to have a different policy.

The difficulties inherent in such a way of doing business led to the establishment eventually of an agency known successively as the Division of Military Affairs, and the Militia Bureau. This was a step forward, but the serious flaw was that, with a Regular Army officer at its head, knowing little or nothing about the National Guard or even hostile toward it, and dominated by the General Staff, it was difficult for the Guard to get things done.

With the return of the National Guard from France after WW I, and coincident with its reorganization, there arose a demand from National Guard quarters for the establishment of a Militia Bureau headed by a National Guard officer who, it was hoped, would not be an advocate of Federalization. Although heavily opposed, an NGAUS-sponsored bill to that effect was enacted on 22 Sep 1922.

The law provided only for the Bureau and for the appointment of its Chief, without regard to its internal structure. The functions and duties of the NGB, therefore, are defined only in Regulations.

Today, NGB is the core of the National Guard system, for it acts as a channel of communication between the Departments of the Army and Air Force, and the States,

Territories and the District of Columbia in all matters, except the appointment of officers.

NGB's job might best be described as one of coordination. Briefly, the variety of tasks prescribed for NGB are to:

- Administer and publish Army and Air Force policies directives, regulations and agreements, other than those relative to training, that pertain to the Army and Air National Guard.

- Make recommendations to the appropriate Departments on National Guard training, and publish approved training policies.

- Function as a channel of communication between the Departments and the States.

- Prepare and defend estimates for Federal funds for expenses necessary for manning, equipping, maintaining, housing, operating and training; and administer the budget covering such expenses.

- Initiate and submit proposals for changes in existing policies, regulations and legislation affecting the National Guard.

- Extend and withdraw Federal recognition of officers, warrant officers, and Army and Air National Guard units.

- Assist States and Territories in the organization of units, including their reorganization, conversion, redesignation, and change of location.

- Reestablish State controls after a period of Federal service.

- Establish records and procedures necessary to maintain accurate basic data concerning the National Guard and act as the office of record for the National Guard not in Federal service.

To accomplish all this, NGB is organized into offices of the Chief, Deputy Chief, executive, policy and liaison, administrative, information, field personnel job analysis, and a legal adviser; and, an Army Division, and an Air Force Division.

The Chief, NGB—currently Maj Gen Edgar C Erickson—actually has a dual responsibility due to the National Guard's Army and Air Force units. He acts as a staff adviser both to the Army Chief of Staff and to the AF Chief of Staff. It is through this setup, however, that the National Guard has an advantage not afforded to the other components. It may bypass red tape agencies and go directly to the top on matters concerning the National Guard, for the Chief, NGB, may report through the Chiefs of Staff directly to the Secretary of the Army or Air Force.

The strength of NGB lies in its organization—top to bottom. With an authorized 40% of its staff composed of National Guard and Air National Guard officers, the NGB maintains a close-to-the-field outlook on National Guard affairs. An outlook, which would be impossible for a Reserve or Regular officer not acquainted with the State-controlled National Guard concept.

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dear guardsmen:

The Guard is growing apace. We're delighted, of course. And naturally we're pleased that we (THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN, that is) are growing, too, in several directions at once. Circulation is up past 82,000. That means sharpened interest within our own ranks. Advertising is up appreciably. That means we can spread our elbows a bit—frequently add more pages.

And we need elbow room, for sure. For the increased interest is reflected by a marked growth in the volume of copy—and good copy—we receive from State and Organization PIO's, Unit Commanders, and others, who want to see their outfits' names and faces "in the paper."

In nigh onto 10 years of publication, we can remember only two or three occasions when copy seemed to be "light," but we never approached the point where the bugaboo of possible "holes" in our magazine threatened. Quite the contrary. Especially in the past few months, time after time we've had to carry type and pix from one issue until the next because we just couldn't cram in everything we had from the outfits, and achieve a balance of reader interest in other types of news, articles, feature stories, cartoons, etc.

Part of the Editors' job is to be hard-boiled and objective in their appraisal and selection of what to print and what not to print. We just plumb *have* to reject some material—the run-of-the-mill activity that's old stuff to most outfits; the fuzzy snapshots, the stilted poses—and print only the material which we honestly think will interest most of you.

From time to time we'll give some examples of the "how to" and the "what not to" do about articles and pix.

THE STAFF

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our cover

Tankers from Puerto Rico's Tank Co, 295 RCT, open up at targets on the Camp Tortuguero range, making the most of a multiple drill. Tank companies from the 295 RCT and the 296 RCT, stationed at Vega Baja and Manati—a short distance from the range—conduct live ammunition firing regularly since multiple drills have been authorized. (Puerto Rico National Guard Photo).