

# The President's Page

## OUR LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

EVENTS, particularly those in the legislative field, have been moving rapidly on the Washington front and it is a source of satisfaction to report that our legislative program is in excellent shape. Slowly but surely matters of prime importance are being resolved, and barring something utterly unforeseen, 1950 should prove to be another banner year in the legislative field.

Already hearings have been held before the House Armed Services Committee on the Extension of the Selective Service Act of 1948 for an additional three-year period, i.e., until 24 June, 1953, and on S. 2441 providing that 40% of the officers on duty in the National Guard Bureau shall be National Guard officers. The House Armed Services Committee had concluded its hearings on the Extension of the Selective Service Act, purely as an emergency measure and now has the Bill under consideration. The Committee has given no indication, as yet, to its probable action in the matter but in light of what transpired during the hearings, it would not be out of the line to hazard a guess that the Committee will recommend an extension for at least two years but, probably, with a provision that there will be no inductions in time of peace without specific authorization by the Congress. During the course of the hearings incident to the Bill, it was made clear that there will be no surrender of the war-making powers of the Congress to the Executive.

In connection with the Bill providing that 40% of the officers on duty in the National Guard Bureau shall be National Guard officers, it will be recalled that this measure passed the First Session of the 81st Congress without a dissenting vote. Hearings on the measure opened before Subcommittee No. 1 of the House Armed Service Committee of which Representative Brooks of Louisiana is Chairman, and almost immediately the Subcommittee recommended to the full Committee that the Bill pass. One of the interesting things in connection with the hearing came in connection with the present language of Section 81 of the National Defense Act, which provides that four of the officers on duty in the Bureau shall be Guard Officers. At the time this language became effective, in 1922, there were 16 officers on duty in the Bureau, of whom four, or 25%, were Guard officers. Today there are 110 officers in the Bureau and if S. 2441 is passed by the House and approved by the President, approximately 44 of them will be National Guard Officers. The foregoing gives an idea of the tremendous growth of the National Guard over a period of 30 years.

The Armory Construction Program Bill is Number 1 priority where the National Guard is concerned, and here real advances have been made.

The Civilian Components Policy Board, by unanimous action, gave approval to S. 960 and H.R. 2824, the Tydings and Vinson Bills respectively, relating to an armory construction program. These Bills have been sponsored by the National Guard and the National Guard Association. On 9 January, the Secretary of Defense formally advised the Chairman of the Special Committee on Reserve Components of the House Armed Services Committee of the action taken by the Civilian Components Policy Board and urged the enactment of an armory construction program as of critical importance. The action of the Board and of the Secretary of Defense unquestionably will have far-reaching effect, and indications have been given by the Chairmen of the Armed Services Committees of both Houses that action may be expected in short order. The State Adjutants General were requested to submit certain data at the February meeting of the Adjutants General Association, and it is anticipated that the National Guard Association will be ready to submit to the Armed Services Committees of Congress final data in connection with the Armory Construction Program.

Of considerable interest is the favorable action of the Civilian Components Policy Board in connection with the Common Federal Commission and United States Property & Disbursing Officers Status Bill. These Bills have been hanging fire for approximately two years due to some differences between the Department of the Air Force and the National Guard. These differences have been resolved and both measures have been approved by the Department of the Air Force and the Guard is very happy over the outcome. No difficulties should be encountered in obtaining the enactment of these important matters.

Appropriations are of course a major item in our legislative program and hearings on the Army National Guard items got underway last month before the Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee handling the National Military Establishment Appropriation Bill. It is anticipated that representatives of the National Guard Association will have been heard during the latter part of February or early March. The recommendations of the Bureau of the Budget for National Guard requirements for the fiscal year 1951 are approximately \$11,000,000 less than those of the fiscal year 1950, all of which is represented, practically, in the construction item for the Air National Guard. Every effort will be made to restore this item to the Bill.

*E. Walsh*

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## CONTENTS

The President's Page	Inside Front Cover
We Guard America's Outposts:	
No. 1—Alaska	2
Washington Report	8
In Conclusion	10
The "49ers" Division (24th in a Series)	12
Esprit de Corps: A Gauge of Strength	13
Pentagon Paragraphs	14
The Eagle Screams	16
G-4 Supports a Field Exercise	18
In Black and White	21
Posting the Guard	22
Warrant Officers as Unit Administrators	29
Tales from the Troops	30
Sound Off!	31
As We See It	Inside Back Cover

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*Dear Guardsmen;*

We just can't let our third birthday anniversary pass without mention.

It was while the Adjutants General Association was convening in Washington at the end of February, 1947, that a Preview Edition of THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN was presented as a dry run, so the AGs might see whether they thought the National Guard ought to have a publication along the sample's lines, and whether they would back it. They sure did.

That was Volume I, No. 1. Now we're on Vol. 4, No. 3 (each new year starts a new volume with us).

And it's coincidental that at about the same time we were Previewing THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN, we came across a piece of paper outlining some anonymous planner's idea for a really unique kind of National Guard. It would be built around fishermen and walrus hunters and lumberjacks and other natural outdoorsmen. There's one place in particular where that sort of outfit would be a "natural." As if you hadn't already guessed, it's Alaska.

Well, right away we started trying to develop the story. And if you think a story just "happens," you can take another think. For three years we've been hounding-down this one. We've talked to people in the National Guard Bureau. We have a file of correspondence thiiiiis thick with people like Alaska's defense-conscious Governor Ernest Gruening, with Acting Adjutant General-Senior Army Instructor-Acting Officer in Charge of National Guard Affairs for Alaska-Lt. Col. J. D. Alexander; with the Office of Alaska's Delegate in Congress E. L. Bartlett; with the Fish & Wildlife Service in the Department of the Interior.

Despite the variety of his duties, Colonel Alexander finally nailed it down for us. He lined-up Walter W. Smith, a free lance writer and ad man in Juneau who's pretty well known in Northwestern Pennsylvania. Mr. Smith was Editor of the Cochranton Times, and quite a "wheel" in the American Legion—Past Commander of a post in Meadville, Penna., now Chairman of the Department of Alaska Americanism Committee, and Chef de Gare of Voiture Locale 1126 at Juneau.

We could have run a straightaway spot news story when the powers-that-be finally released information that the Alaska National Guard was being established—period. But we wanted more background and color than that. So, even though it did take three years, we got it. Hope you agree it's worth it.

*The Staff*

## OUR COVER

The Alaskan Eskimo's eyes are alert and his hands are steady; they have to be, or he'd starve. It's men like these who, as members of the Scout Battalions of the Alaska National Guard, are taking an honored place alongside their comrades of the Regular Army in manning America's most Northerly outpost. (Photo by Lomen Bros., Nome, through the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service.)

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