

THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN

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DEAR GUARDSMEN: "Never underestimate the power of a woman," some very wise man once wrote.

Here we'd been going along for years, following the military style of abbreviations, on the assumption that *everybody* who reads our magazine is thoroughly familiar with them, and that being so, their use would save space for another story or another photo per issue.

We got an awakening in the form of a very nice letter from Mrs John E Stetzinger of Portsmouth, Ohio, a National Guard "widow." Cannyly, first she told us she enjoys reading our magazine for it "keeps me informed on what's going on in the Guard so I can take an active part when our conversations turn to 'Guard Talk' (which is about half the time!)." Then came the pitch, though: couldn't we publish a glossary of abbreviations so that she wouldn't "have to keep interrupting my reading to ask my husband to explain them."

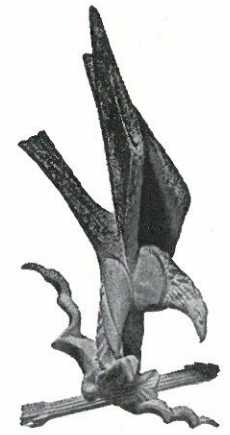
Effective in this issue, we're taking her up on the suggestion, and we'll spell-out unit identifications and any other terms which, in abbreviated form, might not be crystal-clear.

Funny someone hadn't mentioned it before! —AGC

OUR COVER: Twice winner of the highly-prized Spaatz Trophy as the Air Guard's outstanding unit, and currently planning an unusual dry run for wartime overseas deployment (see stories in this issue), Indiana's 163d Tactical Fighter Squadron symbolizes all that's best in the ANG—an imaginative outlook, enthusiasm, a resolve to be as good as the Air Forces' best. In our cover photo, four F84F "Thunderstreaks" of the 163d swing over home base at Baer Field in tight formation.



AS WE SEE IT



AN UNEASY SILENCE

THIS is a strange and unusual period in the history of the National Guard—and, for that matter, all of the Reserve Forces.

It is strange because of the utter silence—perhaps only momentary—concerning the new National Administration's plans for the use of citizen-soldiers, citizen-sailors, citizen-airmen in the defense structure.

With a new skipper and staff running the Ship of State, it is understandable that it wants a shakedown cruise—to become familiar with the machinery and crew.

In its first 80 days or so, it has made some quick command decisions. And it has emphasized that long-range policies have yet to be announced.

Final decision always rests with the commander—but generally, the wise commander gets acquainted with and consults the subordinates who have been keeping the outfit going.

We hope our new Commander-in-Chief and his staff follow this well-established practice.

As of this writing, there has been some undercurrent of discontent on the grounds that far-reaching decisions have been made with only cursory opportunity for comment by even the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Bringing it down to our level, there have been reports of one or more studies of the Reserve Forces, but no evidence that representatives of those forces have been or will be given a chance to participate. And all efforts to find out what these studies cover or are to cover, what information has been or is sought or developed, thus far have bumped into a blank wall of silence.

The Defense Budget that has been passed along to Congress has been utterly devoid of comment about plans for the Guard or other Reserve Forces, other than what can be deduced from the "line items" in terms of dollars and what they're supposed to buy.

So far as the Guard is concerned, that leads to concern on two main points: is it intended to hold to the 400,000 Army Guard strength that has been maintained against the previous Administration's opposition, or is it

intended to cut back? For the Air Guard, what's the significance of inadequate amounts for basic trainees required to meet its programmed strength?

Disturbing, too, is the growing dominance in military policy-making of the Budget Bureau, and of brilliant scientific and fiscal experts high in defense councils, versus the troop leaders who will have to execute decisions developed by men who never have lived through the hard school of combat or command.

There is uneasiness because of a feeling that cold, scientific theory which glorifies gadgetry and technology, yet ignores spirit, morale, pride, motivation, fear, discomfort, and a host of other intangibles, may be gaining the upper hand.

The technologist feeds into a computer a fistful of factors intended to show whether a given set of circumstances—so many bodies, so much firepower—can win or lose a battle or a war. To this electronic brain, the difference between 400,000 and 360,000 officers and men in an Army National Guard is of little moment.

But what no glorified Ouija Board can sense, is the vital difference it makes in the war plans, if four Divisions or hundreds of combat support units *aren't* there when the Army whistles for its mobilization back-up.

It can't measure the drop in combat-readiness that would accompany a further reduction in unit strength if a 40,000-man cut were spread across the board. It doesn't know the difference between effective and ineffective unit training.

At this writing, it isn't at all certain that any cut is contemplated, nor is it certain that drastic recasting of roles and missions is planned.

But the sooner representatives of the Guard and of their comrades in other Reserve Components are brought into the picture—on a basis of full, thorough and frank participation in all studies and plans—the better it will be for the continued development of a homogeneous defense structure, giving full credit to the viewpoints, knowledge and experience of all concerned.



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