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## Targets for 1968

ANOTHER General Conference is behind us. National Guard officers from every State met, mulled over matters of significance and concern to the Guard, and produced some new guidelines for the Officers, Executive Council and fulltime staff of the National Guard Association of the United States.

In their discussions as well as in formal Resolutions, Delegates examined such areas as pilot procurement, ARNG reorganization, public relations, retirement benefits and the relationship of the Guard's State and Federal missions, to name but a few.

It is not my purpose here to examine each subject in detail, since that is done elsewhere in this issue. Rather, I would like to suggest the main thrust of the thinking that emerges when the Resolutions and comments are appraised collectively.

First, one brief but highly important Conference Resolution calls for a complete reexamination of the National Guard's roles and missions, and declares that "the National Guard mission and role in the National Defense plan is no longer recognizable." This puts into words what many thoughtful Guardsmen have been thinking for some time—that some of the most basic concepts of what a Reserve Force should be, and do, have undergone a gradual and undesirable transmutation under the pressure of fast-moving events. More and more, Defense officials expect the Guard and other Reserve Forces to be exactly like Regulars, and each step in this transformation process has subjected the reserves to strain and disruption. Guardsmen *can* be proficient and effective and highly-ready, but they *can't* be an exact carbon copy of the Regulars in every respect. A reexamination is needed and its goal should be a clear re-definition of the *purpose* of a modern day Reserve Force, as well as appropriate roles and missions.

Second, the Delegates expressed their deep concern over recent adverse press comment and blamed it more on a lack of understanding rather than on actual deficiencies in the Guard itself. There is a growing conviction that the press, the general public, a Nation's political leadership and even the Active Military Establishment often have only a vague and distorted knowledge of the Guard's dual role, its growing range of responsibilities, its unparalleled capabilities, and its rapidly-expanding list of notable accomplishments.

In my view, one simple statement tells the Guard story: It is the best-trained, best-led, best-motivated and most proficient military Reserve Force the Nation and the States ever have possessed. By every means at our command, Guardsmen must drive home that fundamental fact, and you have my assurance that the NGAUS will intensify its efforts to tell that story at the National level.

A third theme was that the Active Establishment must not continue to ignore, or downgrade, the Guard's State mission as it has tended to do. Guardsmen recognize National defense as their primary mission, but recent events have demonstrated the importance, on a National scale, of State internal security. There is no reason why the two missions should conflict, given the attention and forethought and mutual concern of both State and Federal military leaders.

Comments made at the Conference by Active Army spokesmen suggest that they *are* developing a more understanding attitude toward this Guard role, and the result cannot be anything but beneficial.

These are not the only important ideas that the Conference brought into focus, but they seem to me to be the most significant. It must be the job of each of us to translate those themes into constructive action.

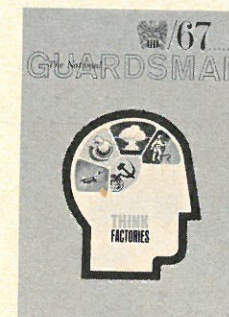


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