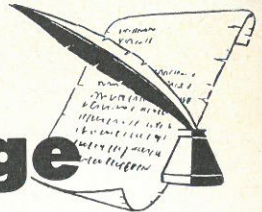


The President's Page



A SUBCOMMITTEE of the Committee on Policy of the National Guard Association of the United States has, at this writing, just completed another in a series of meetings over a period of six weeks, at which were considered many matters of pressing concern.

The results of their exhaustive deliberations and discussions will take the form of a series of Resolutions to be presented for consideration by the 74th General Conference of the Association in Denver, Colo., 6-9 October.

To the minds of many, the major problem is that of manpower procurement; for unless the National Guard can obtain the necessary manpower to maintain its organizations and units at the strength authorized by Congress, we are indeed destined to wither.

We are told that the manpower pool will be insufficient to support the requirements of the active Armed Forces of 3,700,000 in the fiscal years 1954 and 1955, and may not be sufficient to meet the requirements even for the current year.

We are fully aware of the wholesale exemptions and deferments which have been granted to Labor, Agriculture, ROTC, and to those who have passed the applicable aptitude tests; they loom huge in the aggregate. I wish more particularly to invite attention to the fact that since September 1950, a total of 3,000,000 men have been ordered to report for pre-induction physical examinations by Selective Service, and of this number, 1,500,000 have been rejected. I am not willing to believe that every other man in the United States, within the appropriate ages, is physically or mentally unfit, or both.

It is quite apparent that there is something wrong with the system of military manpower procurement. The solution lies in a reduction of mental and physical standards to a degree whereby a substantial number of the 1,500,000 "unfit" become liable for military service. The Navy and the Air Force accept no Selectees; the Army accepts them for the simple reason of self-preservation. I submit that there is only so much cream in a bottle of milk, and if somebody drinks all the cream, others must take the skim milk. The solution for this particular problem is a single manpower procurement agency, which should be Selective Service; and all other recruiting services should be abolished forthwith.

It is estimated that if the mental and physical standards were lowered to an extent where there would be a leaven of cream and milk, it would be possible to salvage approximately 500,000 men. This number would be ample to meet the requirements of the Army and Air National Guard and other comparable Reserve Components. As matters stand, the Army and Air National Guard are restricted to the very narrow recruiting basis of individuals within the 17-18½ age bracket. This is not sufficient to maintain these elements at the strength prescribed by Congress. This condition can be corrected by a return to the provisions contained in the Selective Service Act of 1948 and, further, by the elimination of the 1 February cut-off date for exemption of National Guardsmen and Reservists from induction through Selective Service, contained in Public Law 51.

A further complication in this matter of manpower for the National Guard is the indiscriminate recruiting of

Guardsmen by the Regular recruiting agencies, based on a vicious quota system of "produce—or else," together with practices which are highly unethical, to say the least. Despite intensive recruiting campaigns producing thousands of new men in our National Guard units, we are on a virtual treadmill so far as relative gain is concerned, due to the indiscriminate proselyting of our men by the Regular Services. Again, let me say that the remedy lies in an amendment to Public Law 51 so that once we enlist a man, that man stays in the Guard until he reaches the age of 26 years.

There are those who contend that the establishment of a UMT&S system with forced transfers or assignments of its product to the Guard and comparable Reserve Components, will cure all of our ills. For years, powerful organizations and groups have endeavored to prevail on Congress to establish such a system.

It seems to me there must be a new approach to this problem, based on a grass roots concept, with almost complete civilian control save in the matter of training, and a great reduction in the cost thereof. When, however, we consider the factor of forced transfer of the product of such a system into the Guard, we face something else again. Those who contend we should adopt "forced transfer" advance the argument that in no other way can we overcome attrition and be a truly ready M-Day force. Those who oppose this concept, contend that it was and is the voluntary system which has made the National Guard strong and great and should be retained, and that one of these days the troubles in Korea and elsewhere, which have been reflected in our manpower situation, will be resolved. It is a fine question, and eloquent advocates of each system will argue the matter before the General Conference.

It should by no means be deduced, from the amount of space devoted herein to the manpower problem, that there are no others, or that they are minor. We are confronted with the evil effects of a Rotation policy which has skeletonized our divisions and non-divisional units in active Federal service. We will have to decide whether we accept the principles of a proposed new permanent promotion system for the Guard and for other Reserve Components, which would put us on a comparable basis with the Regular Services. Before us will be the matter of temporary promotions of personnel in active Federal service which, for the moment, I will pass over with but brief comment: It stinks! There are problems of armory and non-armory construction, civilian employes of the Guard, appropriations, equipment, and many others.

Suffice it to say that there will be never a dull moment in the course of the seven Conference sessions. I invite you to join with us in attendance at Denver and in assisting in the efforts to come up with solutions which will be to the benefit of the National Guard and Air National Guard and the Nation's defenses.

E. Evans

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THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN
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dear guardsmen:

Even harassed, heckled and hurried Editors get breaks once in a while. We got one today, and we're losing no time in telling others about it—we're so pleased. We got a fine, tailor-made editorial, fresh from the hands of Uncle Sam's faithful mailman. All you have to do to confirm it, is to turn to the inside back cover, and read it.

There's more than one reason to be pleased. In the first place, we don't pretend to possess all-seeing knowledge and wisdom; we try to write about matters which we feel concern all Guardsmen, but we most certainly welcome a fresh point of view from the field we serve. In the second place, we are—as noted before—heckled, harassed and hurried and, we must add in all honesty—lazy.

The first reason cited is, by far, the more important. We've said before, and we say again: Articles, and editorials, by you folks away out there, on matters that should interest Guardsmen everywhere, are what we earnestly want. For instance: our "guest" editorialist, Lt. Col. Charles W. Fernald of Arizona's "Bushmasters" 158th RCT, suggests we run some "combat lessons at squad, platoon and company level."

We'd be tickled to pieces to run them—if we could get them. With all the veterans the Guard has in its ranks, there must be oodles of raw material kicking around in said vets' memories, just waiting to be put on paper. Don't know whether Guardsmen are type-writer-shy, or what; you don't have to be an Ernest Hemingway to write a readable article—just set down the facts, as you would do in an after-drill bull session. Don't let literary style, polish, spelling or punctuation bother you—that's an Editor's (even a lazy one's) job.

THE STAFF

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our cover

Obviously taking to heart the lessons in National defense he's absorbing on the Camp Stewart, Alabama, firing range, Cpl. Harold L. Deese, loaded for action, watches attentively as the .50 cal. shells of his Florida National Guard unit, Btry. C, 265th AAA Bn., score repeatedly against radio-controlled airplane targets during annual field training. (Army Photo by Maj. John W. Dillin.)