

AS WE SEE IT . . .



NONE OF OUR BUSINESS?

YOU CAN'T hide the body. The Army is never the winner when it tries to hide its mistakes from the Press. It comes out of these editorial skirmishes with a red face that the public remembers long after it has forgotten any explanation the Army is forced into making.—Lt Gen Withers A Burrell, First Army CG, as quoted by the *New York Times* at the opening of the Army Information School.

"By letting them (the Press) in the front door and welcoming them, giving them all the facts you've got—they will go out and write a good story. If you don't let them in the front door, they will get in the back door or the side door and they will get half the facts. And if it's a bad story to start with, we will really have to keep that story in front of the public for two weeks while you hash out the details, trying to correct the misimpression that they gave the first time because you didn't make facts available."—Maj Gen Gilman C Mudgett, Army Chief of Information, same source, same occasion.

We heartily indorse their refreshing, common sense philosophy and their way of expressing it, as being as fully applicable to National Guard PIOs and, for that matter, all National Guard commanders and staff officers, as to the Active Forces.

IT WOULD be just dandy if the Department of Defense and the Services would extend that philosophy to other fields. But it's nullified by a "public be damned" attitude reflected in a new Regulation, circumventing an Executive Order intended to block the rubber-stamp-happy characters who are prone to slap a "Restricted," "Confidential," "Secret" or "Top Secret" label on yesterday's newspaper.

Abuse of security classifications as a means of covering-up blunders was a factor in abolishing the "Restricted" category—and the Army promptly upgraded thousands of documents instead of declassifying them. Now, in AR 380-1, "Safeguarding Official Information," it has invented a new cover-up term: "FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY," which may be used by any officer or warrant officer or "responsible civilian official" designated by the commander or head of a headquarters, agency, or office. Ostensibly, it's designed to cover certain types of information listed in the Reg, but it's worded so as to let virtually anyone hide anything he doesn't want aired.

ONE REASON why the National Guard should be disturbed about this trend is that the new "FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY" classification applies specifically to "Preliminary documents relating to proposed plans or policy development when premature disclosure would adversely affect morale, efficiency, or discipline."

We can be sure that the cover-up artists will stretch that "morale, efficiency, or discipline" qualification to cover anything they want to keep buried from the public.

Plans and policies affecting the National Guard all-too-frequently are framed by whiz-kids in the Pentagon whose ignorance of civilian components affairs is matched only by their cocksure assumption that they know all of the answers. While orating publicly about their admiration for the National Guard and its accomplishments and proclaiming that we're all on the same team, they resent and try to block National Guard participation in the framing of plans and policies that vitally affect us.

Years ago, the National Guard Association of the United States made a great stride in forcing greater teamwork, by writing into the National Defense Act a provision that all policies affecting the Guard be cleared through a group of National Guard and Regular officers, commonly known as "the Section 5 Committee." Later, the same principle was applied to the Reserves, and extended to the Air Guard with Unification; still later, it was broadened at Department of Defense level with creation of the Reserve Forces Policy Board.

But the "keep-it-dark" exponents worm around these provisions in two ways: 1—They muzzle the personnel of these committees and boards by flagrant abuse of the security classifications; 2—After having let career staff officers work full-time for weeks or months in the preparation of a complex policy brainstorm, they spring it on the part-time committee or board members on as little as 24 hours' notice and require action within as little as four hours.

So it is with the "New 'New Look'" Reserve Program still, at this writing, being kicked-around in the Pentagon.

Present indications are that the details of this program, despite its probable great importance to the National Guard, are to be kept under the blanket until the Department of Defense is ready to spring it on Congress. Only then, it appears, will the public in general and the National Guard in particular—those who by knowledge and experience are the best fitted to deal with civilian components matter—be let in on the deep, dark secret plan. In other words, the approach is that it's none of our business; the Regular Forces will tell us how we're to be operated, and we're to bow to their immensely superior knowledge.

And, as usual, the completed plan then will have to be picked apart and rebuilt when the "bugs" come to light—or be scrapped completely if it's too bad. Many man-hours of labor will have been wasted, that might have been saved had the National Guard been given full opportunity in framing a workable plan.

Considering that the National Guard has been "in business" for more than a century longer than any of the Regular Services, it's about time that the Regular Services not only permitted but eagerly sought our views on plans involving citizen-soldiery. After all, that is our business.

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dear guardsmen:

When Mrs Louise Hoss joined our office family back in the Spring of '52, she little thought she'd so quickly cast aside the notion that her new job would be just a temporary stopover between a shift of homes from California to Virginia.



Louise is Assistant Librarian for the National Guard Association and THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN. Her files are invaluable sources of information for your editors, for one of her most important tasks is to assemble for our historical files news and pictures

concerning National Guard activities from all parts of the Nation. So, when an elusive fact is wanted in a hurry, it's likely to be found in Louise's "morgue" (and she gets a bang out of that journalese term for a publication's clipping and picture library.)

Her hobbies? Mainly her home, across the river from Washington, where she's developing a lively interest in flowers and in bird-watching. Time was—and not so long ago—when foreign travel was high in Mrs Hoss' interests. Most of her adult life, since 1932, had been spent abroad—in England, France, and elsewhere in Europe—and she could tell you some interesting experiences of the war years including the Blitz on London.

We're all mighty glad that her travels from her native Canada have finally led her to our staff.

THE STAFF

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our cover

Tankers of California's 40 Armd Div, with three M41s and a pair of M47s in the foreground, roll by in review at Hunter Liggett Military Reservation. The outfit, not long back from Korean War service, dropped its old Inf Div role to take on Armored form on 1 July. (Photo by Lennie).