

# AS WE SEE IT . . . . .



## "THE KING CAN DO NO WRONG"—?

IN the not-too-distant past, in many nations of the World, prevailed the doctrine that Kings ruled by Divine right. The King was surrounded by Ministers and counsellors who came from a segment of the population which had nominated itself to be "the ruling class." It was axiomatic that this group, being wealthier, better-educated, more cultured, *unquestionably* was wiser than the common herd. When the King, acting upon this group's advice, uttered a flat ukase, the dictum was that the King could do no wrong.

This nation rejected that theory hundreds of years ago. It adopted a representative form of government affording full play to differences of opinion and guaranteeing to all citizens, of all degrees of breeding, wealth, education and intelligence, their right *and duty* to debate matters of policy bearing on the welfare of the community, the State and the Nation.

The professional military man staunchly upholds that principle, in his utterances. Quite probably, he honestly *believes* he is all for it. But consciously or unconsciously, he opposes it bitterly, for it seems to contradict another principle to which by training and conviction he must be dedicated: that of command.

In the heat of battle, if the order is given to assault Hill 109, there can be no conclave of the troops for extended debate and a referendum to decide whether they should assault that hill, or what the plan of attack should be. Maybe the "Old Man's" plan is sound; maybe his subordinates think there's a better way. But it's *his* responsibility; *he's* in command, and his way is the way it will be done.

The professional military man inevitably reasons that if his technical and professional training is accepted as the basis for command decisions in battle, the same qualities must be accepted as the basis for establishing basic defense policies. Confident of his specialized military qualifications, it must be difficult—even impossible—to concede that there are areas of military policy, as opposed to operations, in which he is qualified skimpily or not at all.

He conceives and develops a plan within a framework of strictly military necessity or expediency. He

tries to hide it from anyone whose objections based upon practical points to which he has closed his mind, might upset the neat, tidy little "paper" he's perfected. He sells his little gem "upstairs." Eventually, it has to come out in the open. Others see "bugs" in it. But it's his baby and he defends it staunchly.

This belligerently defensive attitude is especially marked when criticism comes from the civilian world. It becomes particularly bitter when the critics are National Guardsmen or other reservists—the "amateurs," of whom it is unspeakably presumptuous to challenge the "professionals."

Even (or especially) when events have proven the critics to have been correct and the program, policy or directive has to be reversed with resulting turmoil and confusion, the planners (or their successors) and the people "upstairs" who bought the original idea, not only will rationalize the 180° change of course but will vigorously attempt to show they were right *both* times. In their view, any skeptic, doubter or critic is obstructionist or has ulterior motives; there may be veiled hints that the "outsider" is perhaps a shade less than loyal. Who would *dare* to doubt that "the best military minds" couldn't produce infallible plans?

This attitude has been and still is all-too-uncomfortably prevalent, especially in relation to the new Defense Reorganization Act and Congress' actions with respect to stabilizing the strength of the Armed Forces, with particular emphasis on the National Guard.

It reflects habits of thinking which characterize what is known as "the military mind." Perhaps, those habits are too ingrained ever to be changed. At any rate, it would be well for all citizens to remind themselves of the soundness of our system of policy determination, in which elected representatives of all citizens have a vital part. And it would be well to stay alert for, sniff-out, and defeat every move, under the guise of streamlining or modernizing our defense structure, which would weaken the representative system and Congress' role in establishing National defense policy.

We do not believe that "the King" (and his professional advisors) "can do no wrong."

### Quote:

In general, the existing units in our National Guard and Army Reserve will provide the basic framework upon which the new Reserve Forces will be built. In addition to bringing these units up to effective strengths—an absolute essential to effective training—a large number of new units must be organized to meet fully our mobilization requirements.

GEN MATHEW B RIDGWAY, C/S of the Army, testimony 9 Feb 55

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**DEAR GUARDSMEN:** One of the queries which reached us the other day embodied a request for a "booklet" of Army and Air Force Regulations. There's no such thing, of course, for there are hundreds of separate ARs, SRs, and AFRs, not to mention Circulars, Bulletins, Letters, FM's, TM's, AFM's, etc, which have the force of directives.

Anyway, in trying to prepare a reply, curiosity drove us to take a yardstick into our Library and measure the space occupied just by the ARs, SRs, and AFRs. As anyone knows who has tried, it's next-to-impossible to collect a 100% up-to-date and complete set of those documents with all their changes; nevertheless, what we have takes-up 16' of shelving.

And, to round-out the reply, we confirmed that the Superintendent of Documents, Washington 25, DC, still issues free Price Lists of selected Army and AF publications which it offers for sale. For those interested, PL 19 lists the Field and Tech Manuals, DA Pamphlets, Posters, Tech Bulletins, historical publications, and miscellaneous others; PL 19A lists available ARs; PL 79 shows AFMs and various other AF publications (though AFRs aren't for sale) as well as documents pertaining to Civil aviation, Naval aviation, NACA, and tech reports.

THE STAFF

**OUR COVER:** Firepower of light weapons in the hands of today's Army National Guard becomes visible against the night sky at Cp Drum, NY, Demonstration of a platoon in defense was staged by 101 Sig Bn, NYNG. Interlocking bands of fire are traced by rifles, carbines, SMGs, BARs and 50-cal MGs. (101 Sig Bn photo)

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