

The President's Page

MORE PROBLEMS

IN THE MAY issue of THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN I had occasion to deal, briefly, with some of the immediate problems confronting the States, Territories, the District of Columbia, the Army and Air National Guard arising from the so-called partial mobilization, and mentioned that certain Air National Guard Squadrons were being broken up and which procedure brought into sharp focus the maintenance of the integrity of Guard units. Since then the matter of integrity of units has become increasingly acute, due to the fact that many Army National Guard units including some of the Divisions have lost considerable numbers of key officers and enlisted personnel as replacements for Korea and otherwise. This, of course, has come about as the result of the inauguration of a Rotation Policy by the Army whereby a given number of all grades who have been serving in Korea are being returned to the United States each month, necessitating replacements, grade for grade, from organizations within the continental United States. The problem of Rotation is one which has occupied the attention of the Congress, Departments of the Army, Navy, Air Force, the Army and Air National Guard and others for some time past. There has been no dispute that it was a problem of major degree, and any solution would bring about sharp repercussions and reverberations.

Rotation has given the Chief of Staff of the Army many anxious moments; the decision which he finally found it necessary to make was anything but easy. As early as last March, and subsequently, he arranged a series of conferences to discuss this matter with the Chief, National Guard Bureau, and other representatives of the National Guard. Initially the discussion hinged on the advisability of rotation of units vs. rotation of individuals. It was conceded that the logistical problems which would be imposed by a rotation of units were insurmountable at the time and still are, although possibly somewhat ameliorated. On the other hand, it was recognized from the very beginning that rotation of individuals would impose personnel problems that would have a serious impact. Yet, the fact had to be faced that those who had been serving in Korea for many months and engaged with the enemy were entitled to relief. Insofar as is known, nobody, then or since, disputes this proposition. A decision, therefore, had to be made and was made. It was a command decision. Accordingly all relief in all other theatres but Korea was frozen and still is frozen. The Regular Army and Marine garrisons in this country were literally stripped in order to build up the forces required for the conduct of the Korean operation, and with this stripping the Regular Establishment lost the greater part of its maturity of service and experience.

At no time, before or since these discussions were initiated did the National Guard remotely indicate that they expected preferential treatment during the emergency. They subscribed without reservation to the proposition that those serving in Korea for a long period of time were entitled to relief, no matter what means were determined in order to accomplish that relief; furthermore, the National Guard expected to furnish its fair share of the needed replacements. It must be conceded that there was no immediate realization of the extent to which the Rotation Policy would affect those organizations remaining within the continental United States, nor could it have been foreseen, at least by the National Guard representatives, that the time would

come when the 40th and 45th Infantry Divisions would be sent to Japan because of an added threat, or that later developments would require that the 28th and 43d Infantry Divisions be alerted for service in the European Theatre, and that the drain on those Infantry Divisions and other units of the Army Guard remaining in the continental United States would be that much greater and the impact particularly severe because of the narrow base.

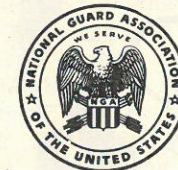
It must be admitted that it is indeed a heartbreaking experience for an organization commander in the field to have his units stripped of key personnel—not a mere ten or 15 percent but approximating 60 percent, and added to it the realization that the efficiency of such units will be materially affected and that it would not be at all surprising if at some not distant date the organization would be rated downright unsatisfactory, and the finger of scorn pointed at the Guard as though it was at fault and as has been the case in the past and without a public acknowledgment of the factors which brought about the situation. Neither is the commander in the field in a very envious position where his personnel is concerned as he watches morale drop lower and lower with each replacement draft. It is to be questioned that any commander under the circumstance could even venture an explanation or lodge a protest, for after all commanders are in the chain of command and must, of necessity, subscribe to a policy which, bitter as it may be, is for the best interest of the Nation and its security.

The effect of the Rotation Policy has been no more destructive of morale within the units and organizations immediately affected than it has been at the home stations. It must be borne in mind that one of the great selling points in the matter of recruitment and especially in connection with the present and former emergencies has been, "Join your home-town Guard unit and serve with your Buddy." This idea has met with universal approval on the part of home-town people, and in addition there is the esprit de corps which units of the National Guard have developed as a result of their long service in peace and war. With the depletion of units there, naturally, has been widespread complaint not only of such procedure but of the system which brings about such a state of affairs. The idea that all of our existing military legislation and policies were designed to cope with an emergency declared by the Congress and involving a total mobilization rather than a partial mobilization, evokes but little interest on the part of those concerned and particularly home-town folk.

Recently members of Congress, Governors, other officials and the National Guard Association have literally been deluged with protests as the result of the effects of the Rotation Policy. In a number of instances the criticism has been extremely pointed and especially where the National Guard Bureau and the National Guard Association are concerned. It has even been contended, in some instances, that the Association has very definitely let the Guard down by failing to stop the practice. No doubt the reaction is a perfectly natural one, but it will not hold water any more than such contentions will solve the immediate or even the end problem which Rotation has imposed and will impose. Many conferences have been held during the past month with high officials of the Department of

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SEPTEMBER, 1951

Dear Guardsmen;

Any Editor who wouldn't welcome suggestions for increasing the readership of his book ought to have his head read; and particularly, if by increasing that readership, he could further publicize the Guard. So, let Major John W. Dalton of Ohio's 147 Inf. take it from here:

"In looking over some advertising put out by one of the major appliance firms in the country, I came across this statement: 'Magazines in doctors' offices are read by an average of 100 to 150 people.'

"As a member of the Guard, and a reader of THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN, it occurred to me that it might be possible to tap a latent source of interest that so far may have been overlooked. Briefly, why not . . . start off a campaign whereby every member of the National Guard Association would be strongly urged to pass on his used copy of THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN to his doctor or dentist? I think the implication is plain here: while waiting to have a tooth filled . . . I came across the same dogeared copies of magazines which were there last February when I was having another tooth pulled. While reading the same stories I read last Winter, I couldn't help but think to myself, Brown & Bigelow aren't so dern wrong at that—there I was, proving their theory, reading the same magazines I had read months before. Maybe magazines in medicos' offices are like the old soldiers, they never die, just fuzz away."

Major Dalton further figures that even if everyone who sits in a doctor's office isn't a potential recruit, there are lots of parents and other relatives of potential Guardsmen who do read while waiting to be drilled or sawed, and concludes: "We know that THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN is a good magazine. Why toss it on the waste paper heap after we have read it?"

Modesty precludes any further comment, beyond suggesting another good "indoctrination center" for your used copies: your barber shop.

The Staff

OUR COVER

In this same spot six years ago, the going *really* would have been rough, for it's Chigasaki Beach, Japan. Now, it's a dry run for the Army and Navy personnel during the first amphibious landing exercise of California's 40th Inf. Div. Clambering down the cargo net into a Navy landing craft to his comrades below is Pfc. Billy Bell, Hq. Co., 223d Inf. (Photo by Sgt. Ralph Hall, 223d Inf.)

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