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## Technician Retirement: A Milestone

THE enactment of S. 3865, a Bill to authorize Federal Civil Service status for the National Guard's approximately 42,000 Technicians, is one of the most significant legislative accomplishments in the history of the National Guard. While it does not affect nearly as many Guardsmen as does Title III retirement, legislation for which the NGAUS also worked over a long period, it assures somewhat the same important status: personnel stability. It encourages continued service. The important thing is, it assures stability of a critical, fulltime work force, upon which the readiness of the Army and Air National Guard is highly dependent. It grants to our dedicated fulltime employees economic security in their retired years, and other benefits which they rightfully will share with other Federal employees.

As detailed in the July issue of "THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN," the NGAUS, AGAUS and NGB have been working for many years to bring about passage of such legislation. But the legislative process can be and usually is a slow, grinding and frustrating business. In this matter it was especially so for those who work in the Nation's Capital, representing the interests of all Guardsmen, looking out for the interests of the States in National Guard matters.

The fruit at long last was ready for picking. The years of effort by the Association, NGB, State Associations, the Adjutants General and thousands of individual Guardsmen had developed a proper climate. The Congress, particularly the key Committees, were convinced of the fairness and the need for the program.

It had taken all of these efforts, all of these years to reach a point of action in a proper legislative atmosphere. The combination never had existed previously, and thus passage never had been possible previously.

In the final weeks before passage, an informal task force of Committee members, Committee staffs, representatives of the Department of Defense, Civil Service Commission, NGB and the NGAUS professional staff hammered-out the draft of a Bill that was acceptable to the Committees and to the Congress. It was not an easy task, but it was well done.

The Senate and House Armed Services Committees acted promptly, once an acceptable Bill was set before them. In the final few days before the Congressional recess, passage would not have been possible without the strongest demands for immediate action by key Committee members. This was the honorable fulfillment of commitments, and the National Guard Association is duly and genuinely grateful to those members of the Armed Services Committees who did so much for a just cause. ♦

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The "Minute Man" decal is gone from the tail of the F100s, and their active duty Air Guard Pilots are indistinguishable from Regular Air Force fighters blasting the enemy in Viet Nam. These civilians-in-uniform have been appraised as "real pros."

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