

Guardsmen could be shortchanged in next overhaul of pay system

THE OMB/DoD FY 1977 budget sought to reduce the high cost of military personnel by reducing various elements of compensation. Some of the budget proposals will be adopted. The OMB/DoD singled out for specific attacks six elements of Guard/Reserve compensation. We are confident that by the time this editorial is read all six proposals will have been rejected by the Congress. See Congressional scorecard in VIEW FROM THE HILL elsewhere in this issue. The attack on military compensation was produced by a prevailing belief that this nation cannot afford both modern hardware and high military personnel costs. We believe that both adequate military personnel compensation, even though costly, and modern hardware are essential and can be afforded.

The issues, and most certainly the Guard/Reserve issues, are not closed. The battle is just now being joined.

We expect the OMB/DoD again to propose the elimination of military leave pay for federal employees participating in annual training. Notwithstanding the fact that a DoD pay study has shown that on an hourly pay rate basis active duty personnel in all but the highest grades are now paid better than Guard/Reserve personnel, DoD probably will attempt to eliminate the four-hour drill period. It persists in believing that the conduct of two four-hour training periods in one day constitutes "two day's pay for one day's work." These proposals may surface as Program Budget Decisions or may result from pay studies. In any event, we believe OMB/DoD will try again.

The Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation (QRMC) has been studying military personnel compensa-

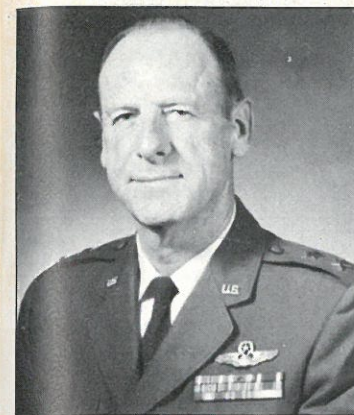
tion for almost two years. That report is due in September or October 1976. Many proposals have been explored. We know one of the proposals considered is a straight salary system — no fringe benefits, no untaxable items — just a straight salary like most civilians earn.

A straight salary system might be good — at least military personnel and their civilian bosses would know what the pay rate is. We strongly suspect however, that the underlying purpose of this particular QRMC is to reduce military pay. Soldiers, sailors and airmen might be paid under a better system, but almost certainly the results will be less real income.

The most likely source of resentment, if OMB and DoD run true to form, is a new pay system which *does* reduce real income yet is heralded by its authors, with much fanfare, as *improving* the lot of the service member.

The QRMC also considered new pay provisions for the Guard/Reserve — ignoring the legal and traditional requirement that the rate of pay for reservists shall be the same as for the regulars. Secretary of Defense McNamara, in his early years, tried to change the rate of pay. His proposal that reservists be paid at a rate equal to 75 per cent of the regulars lost in the Congress.

The QRMC considered Guard/Reserve compensation as a "drag along" issue. While QRMC was deliberating, DoD was directed by the Office of Management and Budget to do a specific study of Guard/Reserve compensation. Rather than leave the issue with QRMC, DoD directed Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs Will Hill Tankersley to form a separate committee to review reserve compensation. "DRAG



Maj Gen Duane L. Corning (S.D.) Air National Guard President, National Guard Association of the United States

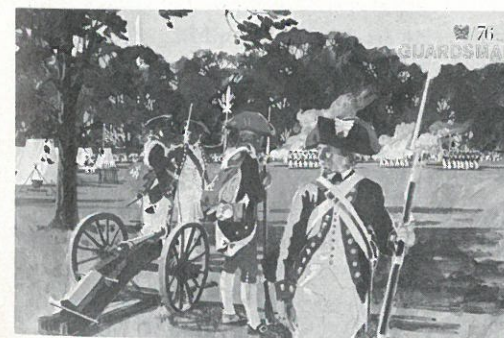
ALONG 6" Tankersley has hired Admiral Richard G. Altman, USNR (Retired), as staff director. We applaud Altman's appointment — he's an outstanding officer with long experience and deep understanding of the reserve components. His task is difficult, if not impossible.

If the QRMC report is final this fall, surely a legislative proposal can be expected early in the 95th Congress. No one could expect Admiral Altman to produce a complete study with valid recommendations in a few months when the QRMC will have taken almost two years.

It appears that Congress may be asked to consider a new pay system for the regulars while ignoring the reserves for the time being. Yet, under law, any rate of pay applies to both regulars and reservists.

We would have to oppose a new pay system which excludes the Guard/Reserve without knowing what proposals will be made for us.

Not knowing what to support or oppose in the pay system, or systems, the NGAUS will watch and wait. We do know that Admiral Altman and Mr. Tankersley will have wrought a near miracle if we agree in the end to accept a pay system which fails to provide the same rate of pay for regulars and reservists.



The First Maryland Regiment, a participant in the Aug. 28-29 Heritage Encampment in Washington, is depicted on the Mall in this cover painting. (See May and July issues for details.)

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