

SOME of those who have voiced opposition to the Department of Army proposal to realign the Army's Reserve Forces, retaining all of the organized elements in the ARNG, have resurrected the old bugaboo of politics in the National Guard. The implication is that the National Guard is neither adequately trained nor sufficiently responsive to the Federal Government because it is, in peacetime, under the command of the Governors.

The charge of politics is refuted not only by the National Guard's record of service in every war in which this Nation has been engaged, but, more pointedly, in the past decade, by accomplishments that could not have been achieved had there been basis for such a charge. One need look only to the rapid response and quick overseas deployment of a substantial part of the Air National Guard in the Berlin Crisis of 1961 and to the active duty service of Army National Guard elements in that same period.

The National Guard is at the highest level of mobilization-readiness in history. To a large degree this is the result of its determination to meet the increasing levels of readiness established by the Departments of the Army and of the Air Force.

The Guard's increasing readiness is the result, in large part, of improved training programs, many of which were the product of its own initiative. We are mindful that before the six-months training program for non-prior service enlistees came in 1957, the Army, at the request of the National Guard, was providing eight weeks of basic training on a voluntary basis for Guard enlistees. *It was the Guard that first proposed weekend training.*

We urged for some years the participation of National Guard units in Active Army and Active Air Force exercises and proposed GUARDLIFT I, which was carried out so successfully last Summer. Most of the innovations in training first proposed by the Guard have been adopted by others.

The particular target of the political charge is the National Guard officer, for the simple reason that, by law and tradition, the appointive power rests with the Governors. Those who raise the charge know full well that a National Guard officer is not only an officer of the National Guard of his State, but of the reserve of the Army or Air Force. He must qualify for Federal recognition upon initial appointment and for promotion to higher grade. He must have the qualifications prescribed by the Secretary concerned for the grade, branch, position, and type of unit or organization involved, and he must pass an examination for physical, moral and professional fitness, to be prescribed by the President, and subscribe to the oath of office prescribed by Section 312 of Title 32, U.S. Code.

For a number of years following World War II, the criteria for promotion of officers in the National Guard were *higher* than those for officers of the Active Army or other Reserve Components. The National Guard Bureau, by regulation, had established successful completion of the Army Command and General Staff course as a requirement for promotion to Colonel in the Combat Arms.

Again, *of its own initiative*, the National Guard took steps to assure a more competent officer corps some years ago by establishing a network of State Officer Candidate Schools. These schools are conducted by National Guard officers and assigned Army Advisors under the direction and supervision of the Army's Infantry School. The grading of test papers and examinations is a responsibility of the Infantry School. Not for some years now has the ARNG accepted the mere completion of a home study course as qualification for appointment as a Second Lieutenant. Furthermore, in order to retain his commission, a junior officer must, within a stated period, complete appropriate branch training.

It would be unfortunate if a necessary evaluation of the proposals to realign by the Congress and the public should be overshadowed by false charges of politics and a deliberate attempt to downgrade the capabilities of the Army and Air National Guard. ♦



JAMES F. CANTWELL  
President  
National Guard Association  
of the United States

## "Politics" in the National Guard?

# GUARDSMAN

The National

/65

February XIX 2

SUITCASE AIR FORCE—AIR GUARD STYLE 2

*Like the Regular Air Force, the Air Guard maintains a ready-to-go element of tactical fighters, set to pounce on a trouble spot anywhere.*

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FEBRUARY, 1965

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