



EDITORIAL

THE NEW G.I. BILL: LET'S MAKE IT VISIBLE

For reasons that are slightly perplexing, the New GI Bill of educational entitlements remains almost invisible in the civilian world. For example, in a recent article by noted economics writer Jane Bryant Quinn in *Newsweek*, on aspects of the federal student loan program, she did not mention the G.I. Bill benefits once. Yet, the New GI Bill has been the law for 20 months, taking effect last July 1 after being enacted as a part of the Defense Authorization Act.

Similarly, in a lengthy *Washington Post* summary of the various ways to finance increasingly expensive college educations, the New GI Bill failed to be mentioned at all while the writer was, in effect, lamenting the reductions in student aid during the past few years, years that have seen very substantial increases in the cost of that education.

This is not the fault of the active components nor, we believe, is it the fault of the Guard and Reserve. The active Army, to cite only one example, has included the New GI Bill very prominently in its advertising campaign. The TV spots contained in this campaign frequently can be seen during nationally televised sporting events. The Army quite correctly points out that by combining the New GI Bill with the Army College Fund (other services don't have a similar college fund) a young man or woman can get more than \$20,000 of educational benefits more than from any other source. This goes a long way toward paying a typical \$27,000 cost of major university education.

We in the Guard can't tap the Army College Fund, but in many cases we have equally attractive packages in place before potential recruits. Many states have state scholarship programs that, when put together with the New GI Bill and provisions of the Selected Reserve Incentive Program (SRIP), make a package that will be a significant contribution to the cost of

college at a state institution.

The New GI Bill should provide a much-needed additional incentive for Guard and Reserve service both in recruiting and retention. However, some improvements are needed to make it an even more effective tool. One such proposal would fund high-technology training (H.R. 3115). Given the increasing complexity of military equipment, promoting more high-tech training seems wise. We need such training across the board, but particularly in all electronics-related areas.

Another change that merits attention is the Veterans Administration established minimum of six credit hours to be eligible for one-half the monthly benefit. It will press a Guardsman to the maximum to be able to enroll in college for six credit hours per semester while maintaining his active Guard obligation, holding a civilian job and giving some time to his family. More increments to permit enrollment for fewer hours at a time seems advisable.

Another improvement in the law in this area would be to make SRIP a permanent entitlement. The New GI Bill is an entitlement, although it is a three-year experiment that we believe will prove successful. SRIP has to be reauthorized and reappropriated from time to time. We saw how fragile a situation that can be last fall when SRIP authority expired for 37 days when Congress had failed to enact the Department of Defense authorization bill by the beginning of the fiscal year on October 1. With the expiration of the FY85 Authorization Act on September 30, authority to continue to pay the bonuses and educational benefits under SRIP went dead until the FY86 authorization bill was signed into law on November 7.

Permanent effect? Hard to say. Temporary effect? Many states felt constrained to temporarily suspend getting names on the dotted line while waiting for the program to be reautho-

rized. As a result, total Army Guard strength was down more than 2,000 from September 30 to October 31. This is not a prudent way to do business.

We believe the New GI Bill is a great step forward in our strength maintenance and development business, particularly while we face the long-range requirement to attain 513,000 Army Guard strength (it's now 441,000) and 120,000 Air Guard strength (it's now 110,000) by 1990. We in the Guard must bend every effort to make sure that high school students and those who aspire to a college education but will have trouble affording it learn about the New GI Bill. In this regard, it is perhaps even more important that educators know about the New GI Bill. Beyond our state tuition assistance and scholarship programs, the New GI Bill offers cash assistance to the student, cash assistance that will coincide largely with the length of his schooling and the term of his entitlement.

What is more, the New GI Bill gives us additional *entree* to a category of potential enlistee who was only marginally interested in service previously. That is the college-bound student who, by definition, is the high school graduate we are seeking. Further, as a college-bound Guardsman, this individual has intelligence, ambition and ability that will provide us top-notch Army and Air Guardsmen for our units. Finally, the New GI Bill is available to junior officers, lieutenants and captains who may need to complete their baccalaureate degree because of the Guard's new educational standards. The New GI Bill also will produce enlisted men and women with the 60 hours of college that soon will be required for admission to state Officer Candidate School programs.

Because of all these real and impending benefits, the New GI Bill must be made permanent with the improvements cited above.

National Guard

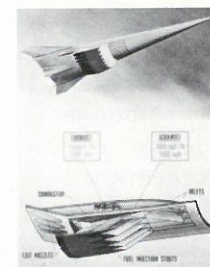
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FEATURES

The Mach-7 SCRAMJET 14
Air Force and NASA engineers are working on a quantum improvement in jet fighter performance in the course of developing the "Scramjet," which combines the engines and body of a sleek fighter that will fly at more than 5,000 mph.



Idaho Wins Photo Finish '85 21
The 127th Tactical Reconnaissance Group, Idaho Air National Guard, won Photo Finish '85, the annual competition pitting various reconnaissance units against each other. The Idahoans beat out all their active Air Force, Air Force Reserve and allied counterparts.



The Air Guard at Gunsmoke '85 24
Nellis Air Force Base with its ranges and flight lines was the site of GUNSMOKE '85, the biennial fighter-bomber competition. Units from South Carolina and Virginia concentrated on the inches separating the winners and also-rans.



Army Guard Management Conferences 29
The Army Directorate of National Guard Bureau held management conferences in each of the five continental U.S. Army areas to bring Guard leaders up to date on various issues.



Air Guard Senior Commanders Conference 32
San Antonio was the site of the 1985 Air National Guard Senior Commanders Conference, conducted annually by the Air Directorate of National Guard Bureau.



COVER:
Maj Douglas deVlaming, 169th Tactical Fighter Group pilot, South Carolina Air Guard, talks over sortie plans with his aircrew. During Gunsmoke '85, deVlaming was one of three pilots who scored a near perfect score in the most difficult of sorties—the nav-attack profile. Pamela A. Kane photo. Cover design by Johnson Design Group.

DEPARTMENTS

Editorial	2
Washington Tie-Line	4
Views from the Field	6
Capital Focus	10
Newsbreaks	12
Guardstars	12
People	35
Posting the Guard	40
Pentagon Paragraphs	44
Publisher's Notebook	46

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