

Equal pay for equal service

THE National Guard has come a long way, in the matter of pay and other compensation, since the days to which President Harry Truman frequently referred, when he not only did not receive any pay for drilling but was expected to make a small contribution from his own pocket each drill to defray such costs as care of his artillery unit's horses.

Since those pre-World War I days, six decades ago and more, the National Guard and Reserves have fought their way, step by step, up the ladder to something approaching full pay equity with the Active military forces. Item by item, they have sought, fought for, and been granted drill pay, full pay and allowances for annual training, retired pay, per diem, and numerous other forms of compensation available to active forces, at the same rates paid their active counterparts.

The "equal pay for equal service" principle had few supporters in the Active services, and each gain the Guard and Reserves made had to be fought for and earned, mostly through the support received in Congress. Retired pay didn't come until 1948, per diem in the 1960s. It was as recently as the Sixties, too, that we defeated the latest of several Pentagon attempts to establish lower pay scales for Guardsmen and Reservists than for the active duty forces. Seventy-five per cent of active duty base pay was the ratio proposed by Department of Defense. Thanks to our own efforts, and the strong support of the late Rep. Mendel Rivers, then chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, the 75 per cent plan went into the Congressional waste basket. That seemed to put the matter of equal pay for equal service on fairly firm ground.

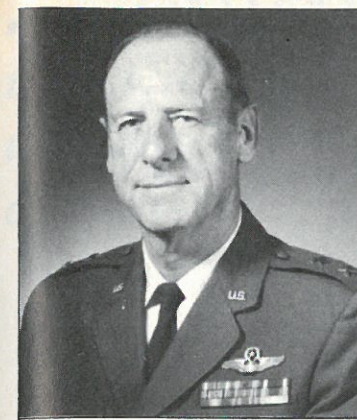
Events of recent months make it very clear, however, that far from being firmly established, the equal pay principle is being threatened as never before by a wide variety of "cost-saving" proposals that would save less than promised while seriously hampering our efforts to maintain a wholly-volunteer force.

Early this year, for example, several recommendations went to Capitol Hill that would, if adopted, nibble holes in the total compensation package now authorized for Guardsmen and Reservists. These would have eliminated administrative pay for commanders, taken away the paid military leave which has long been authorized for Federal employees attending annual training, and cut in half the number of additional flying training periods, while doubling the length of each such drill from four to eight hours. The latter would almost halve the amount of productive training while saving practically nothing in dollar outlays.

That Guardsmen have been receiving a full day's pay for a half day's work has been one of those myths that doesn't die easily. It has led to a whole new series of studies and analyses in the Federal bureaucracy, and was at the root of the proposal to convert the specialized drills mentioned in the preceding paragraph from four-to-eight-hours duration. Yet data developed by DoD itself shows clearly that the *hourly rate* earned by Guardsmen and Reservists at a four-hour drill is less than, or no more than, that paid their active duty counterparts for all but the highest grades.

When one subtracts the leaves, holidays and other days on which active personnel perform no military duties, and credits them with a 40-hour work week, you find that the hourly rate for an active duty major, for example, is \$13.15 while a Guard/Reserve major earns only \$12.86. Comparable figures for a first lieutenant are \$7.75 for a Regular and \$6.99 for a Guardsman or Reservist; for an E-7, it's \$8 per hour for the active soldier and \$7.23 for his Guard/Reserve counterpart.

Nor do these calculations take into account the number of hours that most Guard/Reserve officers and senior non-commissioned officers habitually spend voluntarily, without pay, on their military duties. In many cases, Guard and Reserve members in mid- and lower-level leadership positions devote as much of their own



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personal time to their military chores as the time for which they receive pay, simply because it's necessary.

At any rate, the issue has been revived and the same old propositions are being studied — establishing Guard/Reserve pay at a percentage of the active duty rate for comparable pay grades, adopting the eight-hours-of-training-for-one-day's-pay scheme, or paying Guardsmen and Reservists an hourly rate rather than a daily stipend. In addition, a revision of reserve retired pay is being readied by DoD for presentation to Congress that would make another reduction in the total compensation package. It would reduce Title III pay by pegging retired pay to the pay scales in effect in the year a member ceases active participation rather than the scale being paid at age 60, when he actually commences to receive retired pay.

We can expect all these issues, and others of a similar nature, to become visible as the months pass. Guard/Reserve pay matters have been taken from the purview of the DoD Quadrennial Pay Review Committee and handed to the Office of Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs Will Hill Tankersley, who is charged with producing a detailed and thorough study.

All of which makes it appear that the Guard's next major battle may be the battle to preserve what it took so many years and so much effort to attain — fair and equitable compensation for services rendered, at rates comparable to those paid our active counterparts.

Staff

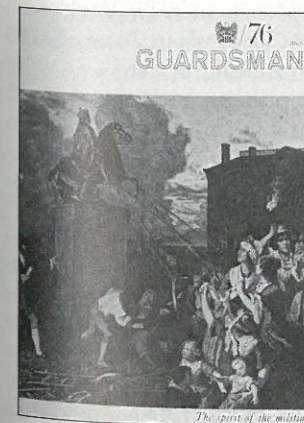
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The spirit of the militia was evident in New York City after the adoption of the Declaration of Independence was announced. "Liberty Boys" celebrated by pulling down a guilded lead statue of King George III, most of which was converted into more than 42,000 bullets by women in Litchfield, Conn. From a painting by Johannes Oertel.

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