

The Mold is Too Rigid!

(Adapted from a presentation to the Adjutants General Assn. of the U.S.)

I AM speaking-up on a matter that bears on the future of the National Guard as an organization with Federal and State missions. It deals with concern that the Militia concept under which the National Guard is organized and functions is being eroded by administrative encroachment of the Federal Government to an almost intolerable point.

It appears to me that the Federal Government is trying to squeeze the National Guard, the USAR and the Active Army all into the same rigid, inflexible mold. Judgmental factors are being removed by the writing of regulations purposely, apparently, leaving out provisions for waivers, for instance, apparently because they are unwilling to face-up to the responsibility of making decisions based on other than strait-laced and strict norms, which norms they have established themselves often or usually without consultation or advice from responsible people in the National Guard. They seem unwilling to recognize that there is and there always will be differences between the National Guard and the USAR and differences between both of them and the Active Army.

More specifically the problem is, I think: Can the States continue to effectively manage the National Guard if it must operate under increasingly restrictive Federal regulations?

With respect to the role of the State Adjutants General and the constitutional responsibility of the States to command and manage the National Guard of the respective States in peacetime, I am encouraged by certain realizations that have come upon some of the senior Army Commanders who are now so deeply involved in the organization and training of the Army National Guard.

At FORSCOM level, for instance, there is reportedly—and I believe it to be true—a better understanding and an appreciation of the command and management role of the State Adjutants General. It appears, I am happy to report, that some of these senior Army Commanders and staff officers, after little more than a year in their new training supervision assignments, have come to realize that the success of the Army National Guard, not only in recruiting, but in training and management, is due, in large measure, to the leadership and management capabilities that exist in the State Headquarters.

For too many years, it was felt that State Headquarters were agencies to be tolerated, but not, in most instances, necessarily respected. There have been, over the years, efforts to reduce the size and even, in some instances, to eliminate State Headquarters.

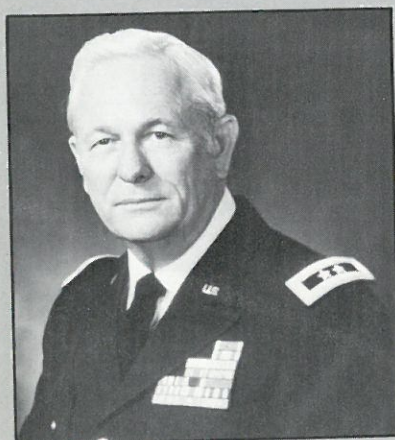
Most Air National Guard staffs at the Adjutant General level are relatively small and have somewhat limited responsibilities. Much of what I am discussing, therefore, applies mainly to the management of the Army National Guard.

I think that much of the problem lies in the fact that so much of the funding for the National Guard comes from the Federal Treasury and, therefore, and perhaps understandably, there is a bureaucratic determination that control shall be exerted over the program; as we all know, it is evident in nearly every Federally-funded activity.

But in my view, some of the restrictions forced upon the States, particularly in the area of personnel management, are not in the best interests of proper program management. They are, in many instances, more restrictive than regulations in effect for the Active Forces.

Let me cite a matter of General Officer promotions. An Army National Guard officer who moves into a Brigadier General position, other than that of Adjutant General or Asst. Adjutant General, must serve in that position for at

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Training still rates top priority in the Guard (clockwise, from top left): Colorado Green Berets' mid-air exit of UH-1 "Huey" as snapped by LTC J. C. Hall . . . Minnesota's SP4 Jeff Lytle of 2/135th Inf sights mortar during Winter training at Cp Ripley . . . Idaho Army Guardsmen "tried something different" with personal snowmobile travel to bivouac site . . . Rhode Island Air Guardsmen swap snow for jungle heat as temporary radar site.

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That's the time and place for the 96th General Conference of the NGAUS.

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