

A GREAT void was left, in mid-February, when General Lewis B. Hershey left the office over which he had presided so long, as Director of Selective Service.

Whoever succeeds him and whatever form the Draft takes in the future, his imprint will long remain, on the office and on the system, for they were largely his creation and handiwork. The man and the system have been synonymous since the dark days preceding World War II, when American manpower and military might appeared to be the World's last hope.

General Hershey's long-postponed exit provides an opportunity to put the man, and the system he devised, into better perspective than his latter-day critics have been willing to do.

General Hershey is a man for whom the credo Duty, Honor, Country, is a solemn obligation. It is a way of life with him. He loves his Country intensely and has devoted a long and productive life to its service.

He has placed service above self, and his Country's interests above all others. He can speak without embarrassment of such concepts as patriotism, duty, Old Glory and good citizenship, for to him, they are more than mere concepts—they are articles of faith.

His own sense of duty is strict, yet he is a warm and friendly human being withal, tolerant of human foibles and weaknesses.

He started his military career as a National Guardsman, in Indiana, and served on the Mexican Border with his unit before World War I. He speaks proudly of that service, and the Guard in turn is proud of such a distinguished alumnus. Throughout his career at the head of Selective Service, he took pains to insure that it met the needs of the Guard and other Reserve Components as well as those of the Active Services. And perhaps there's more than coincidence in the fact that he ended his military career on the 50th anniversary of the day on which he began as a Guardsman.

He was regular in attendance at the NGAUS' annual Conferences. They would have been incomplete without his distinctive mixture of common sense and homespun humor.

OPPOSITION to the Draft is not new in America. One of the most destructive riots in our history occurred in New York City in 1863 as an outgrowth of opposition to Civil War conscription. In later wars, however, Americans accepted the Draft as a necessity.

Only in recent times has it become a fixture in peace as well as war. It has become a necessity because World power relationships were changed drastically by World War II and the maintenance of massive military power by the United States became a critical matter for independent nations around the Globe—not just for us alone.

What today's Draft critics conveniently ignore is that the Selective Service system has served this Nation better than any conceivable alternative. It has provided the only truly democratic method of spreading the burden of national defense across the broadest range of citizens.

In recent years, some critics charge, inequities have arisen. Military manpower needs have been relatively low. When only a few are needed, it never is easy to choose those few fairly from the many who are available. Such inequities as these are correctable, however, and currently are being corrected.

General Hershey often pointed out, with full justification, that he didn't make the laws, he merely administered laws passed by the Congress. Even some critics of the system concede that they were administered superbly well. It is a remarkable accomplishment, in fact, that in so large a bureaucratic institution, determining the fate of millions of young men, there rarely has been a hint of scandal or favoritism.

Even in their recent fulminations, Draft critics rarely have attacked General Hershey, the man, but only General Hershey as an identifiable symbol of the concept. This probably is the best measure of his great personal integrity and the deep respect in which he is held by Americans at every level.


These qualities, and the system he created and administered for so long, will be his monuments. ♦



James F. Cantwell
President

National Guard Association
of the United States

An Old Friend Departs



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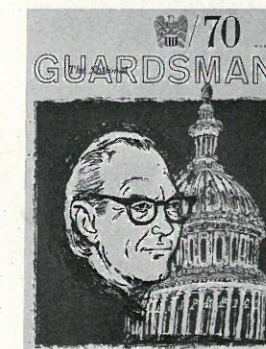
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The U.S. Capitol and U.S. Rep. L. Mendel Rivers, Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, just naturally "go together." Mr. Rivers' views on National defense matters carry great weight in the Pentagon.

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STAFF

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