SUNDAY DRILLS

Speaking eloquently for itself on the subject of Sunday drills, which meet resistance in some circles, is the following letter written more than a year ago, but at timely now as ever. Fenced by Mrs. Richard F. Saunders, a Guardsman from a wife living near Charleston, S.C., it was published originally in the Newberry "Sun" and later in South Carolina's "Palmetto Guardsman."

I may get in "hot water" for what I am going to say now, but I've been there before for several items I have written in the past and I suppose that is what is to be expected when one says what one thinks.

Before writing this I will state that I do not know how any of our local ministers voted on this Resolution at a State Convention last week, and I would be glad to print any comments they may have on the subject which has to do with the Sunday drills of National Guard units in South Carolina.

As I recall, the Resolution opposed such drills "except in cases of national emergency." I am wondering if these pastors who voted against the Sunday drills ever voted against soldiers fighting on Sunday to protect the country in World War II and during the Korean Conflict? Have they ever voted to stop all military personnel from performing any kind of work on Sunday? Would they have the entire defense of the nation come to a complete stop on Sunday? Would they close the operations of radar scopes which would pick up signals from enemy planes, and just hope the enemy planes wouldn't bother to come around the nation's coast on Sunday?

Would these ministers vote to have the youth of America go into battle totally unprepared, as far too many of them did during World War I? Before voting on such a resolution, did they investigate and find that religious services as available to every Guardsman during every Sunday drill on a voluntary basis?

One Guard Chaplain made a most apt statement when he said in effect, "what we need is more cooperation from these ministers, and less criticism."

My husband has been attending Sunday National Guard drills for some eight years now. His opinion, and I have heard others say the same, is that some of the best sermons he ever heard were the sermons at Sunday Guard drills. There are many who attend these religious services at Sunday drills who do not attend church any other time.

Would these ministers prefer that the Guardsmen attend a one-hour service at their respective churches, then spend the remainder of the day playing golf, or riding around on dangerous highways, or looking at TV shows at home? If religious services were not provided, and Guardsmen desired them, this would be an entirely different matter. But even if services were not provided it would be my thought that a Guardsman who wavers from his religion just because he misses a Sunday at church was not much of a Christian anyway and probably goes to church only because he thinks it is the thing to do.

I hesitate to use any stronger language lest I offend some of my friends; however, I am of the honest opinion that the ministers in convention acted on their thought and investigated thoroughly and I admire these unknown ministers of the Gospel who urged the Convention to take time to investigate the matter before taking hasty action. Their plea was ignored by the majority, evidently, since the Resolution was passed. I wish that each minister who voted in favor of censoring the Sunday drills would spend at least one Sunday with a Guard unit and see not only what fine religious services they are offered, but what excellent use it made of the day to train these young men, most of whom would otherwise be idling their Sundays away in some less worthwhile recreation.

I might also mention that possibly a nice share of the money they receive for their Sunday training eventually finds its way into the collection plates of their respective churches.

As We See It

SUNDAY DRILLS

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DEAR GUARDMEN: The National Guard Memorial in Washington's not as big as the Capitol, as tall as the Washington Monument, or as glorious as the Bureau of Printing & Engraving (where our paper money comes from). But, ever since the day two years ago when "former Farmer" (as he identified himself, Harry S Truman) signed the law of Guardsmen and their families, and just plain tourists, has vowed its way through the beautiful Hall of States and Headquarters of the National Guard Area of the U.S. The count runs to more than 1500—and we know many visitors omitted to "sign the book." A few weeks ago, an arrangement was worked-out so that, for the first time, it's possible to keep the Memorial open to visitors on weekends, during the hours from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

So far, the Saturday-Sunday visits have amounted to only a trickle—but that's been without any general publicity whatsoever—just Guardsmen (usually, students at nearby Service schools) and tourists who drifted by. Their reaction has been that of "what's been here before: highly impressed by the building monument to all Guardsmen—past, present and future."

We like visitors; we're proud to display our handmade show-place. So, when you come to Washington, come and see us.

OUR COVER: The shape (which only reflects the composition) of the Army's Division is ever-changing: a "square" four-Regiment setup from the First World War until World War II, a three-Regiment "triangle" during the Korean War, more recently, a five-Battle Group "Pentecostal" organization, and now, a "triggle" again with three Brigades. Why the new shape, and what it signifies, are told in this issue.

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