"The Guard is still the principal source of tactical units for immediate reinforcement of the Active Army and Air Force."

Our "Guest Editorialist," in effect, this month, is GEN BRUCE CLARKE, Commanding General, Continental Army Command. His observations here are his adaptation of a well-received address at the 80th annual conference of the National Guard Assn of the US, Atlantic City, NJ, 29 Sep 1958.

COMBAT-READINESS

"COMBAT-READINESS is a relative status. Broadly speaking, it is related to three main factors: The intentions and capabilities of potential enemies; the conditions of warfare imposed by scientific progress; the military role assigned by defense plans. So related, the combat-readiness of the National Guard today is a matter of utmost urgency to our Nation's security. The announced intention of our potential enemies is World conquest. Their military capabilities for carrying out this intention are the strongest of any aggressor in history.

The conditions of warfare imposed by scientific progress have changed dramatically this decade--and during the trained century. Since the Korean conflict, the customary radius of the most powerful tactical shell has gone from yardage to mileage. Just since 1956, the maximum range of heavy artillery has advanced from 20 to 200 miles or more.

Both strategically and tactically, the impact has been revolutionary. Everywhere, modern technology has altered our protective cushion of time and space wafer-thin.

No longer do broad oceans and strong allies provide years to mobilize and train our forces in wartime. The military shield of the Free World will need immediate reinforcement if it is needed. This need cannot be met by units that require prolonged periods of training after M-Day.

Next year will again the pace of battle permit the gradual seasoning of units under fire. Committing a unit before it has all of the team skills to cope with atomic blast would invite disaster. In the future a unit must be combat-ready for the enemy's best or it is not deployable.

The principal role of the National Guard in National defense has remained constant. The Guard is still the principal source of tactical units for immediate reinforcement of the Active Army and Air Force."

DEAR GUARDMEN: Reminiscing with some other "old soldiers" about the good, old days, we recalled our dependence on the familiar atmosphere of our own "outfit," and the absolute awe in which we held any scholar higher than Regt. Div Hq, to us, was a military "Silk Stocking Bow." But the years passed and "higher Hq" became, successively, Div, Corps, Army, etc., and now we frequently tread the halls of the Pentagon, the bow of the bow, in search of information for Guardmen. There's little awe anymore, but even currently—a desire to turn in to some office with an involved name and ask: "Just what do you do?"

Imagine the strange fields of inquiry in which you might stray were you to ask that question of the Director, National Indications Office—or the Army Packaging Board. Or try to envision the confusion into which you'd throw the Chief of the National Guard Bureau were you to try to pin down the differences between the competitive Civilian Awards Committee, the Incentive Awards Committee, and the Incentive Awards Review Committee, and their relationship to Pvt Joe Bower, Billman. We also have a goosehound urge to turn in some day at the Eligibility and In-Service Section, Headquarter Branch, Memorial Division, Office of the QMG, and ask: "Well, what's news?"

"When I visited many Guard camps late this summer, I was highly impressed with the progress in overall proficiency that I observed," Gen Clarke with Brig Gen George Fremd, 39 Inf Div.

NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES

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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES

100 INDIANA AVE., N. W., WASHINGTON 1, D. C.
PHONE DISTRICT 7-0341

DECEMBER, 1958

12-12

Publication Office:
 Telegraph Press Bldg.,
 Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

General offices: 100 Indiana Ave., N.
 Washington, D. C. Second class postage paid at Harrisburg, Pa., and at additional mailing offices.

Domestic subscriptions: $1.50 per year to members of the National Guard Assn of the U. S.; $2.50 per year to nonmembers (Foreign and Canada $3.00).

HOME DELIVERY TO NATIONAL GUARD ENLISTED MEN, $2.50 PER SUBSCRIPTION, WITH CHOICE OF PREMIUM.

SPECIAL RATES TO NATIONAL GUARD UNITS FOR BULK SUBSCRIPTIONS RETURN ADDRESS: 100 INDIANA AVE., N. W., WASHINGTON 1, D. C. 101 to 100 subscriptions, $1.75 per subscription; 101 to 200 subscriptions, $1.50 per subscription; 201 or more subscriptions, $1.25 per subscription; SINGLE COPIES, 5c.

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But however often we walk past the door of the Army Chief of Staff, we always reach up to restore our cost and straighten out tie. It's an automatic gesture which still links us to the "troops" and a day 17 years ago when, on one of our rare and voluntary trips to Div Hq, we were hauled up in the hall by the CG himself and instructed in no uncertain terms to "Butt out of our cost, soldier!

OUR COVER: Actor Lou Nolan has captured the feel of what could happen here: an aggressor force, flown in huge jet transports on the heels of a stunning missile attack, setting an airhead for the main occupation force. It flies into the stem of Garrett Underhill's series of articles on the revolution in air transportation.