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**WE
 MEET
 THE
 PRESIDENT**
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THE WHITE HOUSE—MAJ. GEN. CLAUDE T. BOWERS, *Treasurer, National Guard Association of the United States*; HON. CYRUS T. VANCE, *Secretary of the Army*; PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY; MAJ. GEN. JAMES F. CANTWELL, *President, NGAUS*; MAJ. GEN. JOE C. MOFFITT, *Vice-President, NGAUS*; MAJ. GEN. CHARLES A. OTT, JR., *Secretary, NGAUS*.

THE officers of the National Guard Association of the United States visited with President Kennedy in his White House office on October 23. This was a significant occasion in that it was the first time the Association's officers had, since before World War II, paid a formal call on the President of the United States. The visit not only was cordial, but the President evidenced keen interest in the National Guard and an awareness of some of the problems presently confronting our organizations. He expressed the hope that it would be possible in the near future to increase the level of equipment in our organizations. Secretary of the Army Cyrus R. Vance, who was present, told the President that the Department of the Army is working towards an improvement in the equipment and materiel areas.

The Association officers, who were in Washington for a two-day organization meeting at Association Headquarters, assured the President that the National Guard is an enthusiastic member of the Nation's defense team and is dedicated to maintaining its organizations at levels of readiness that would permit quick response in any emergency. The President commended the Guard for its service in recent grave National emergencies.

Although this Association has been at odds on a number of occasions in recent years with the Department of Defense, we must not lose sight of the fact that the National Guard, as the Nation's principal Reserve Force, is a member of the defense team. It is imperative, therefore, that we maintain at all times a sound working relationship with the Pentagon and other agencies of the Government which have responsibilities for Reserve Forces programs, although we may, and probably will, differ strongly with them on occasion.

About the time of the White House visit, the Association had forwarded to the President certain of the Resolutions adopted at the 85th General Conference. We have been advised by Major General C. V. Clifton, Military Aide to the President, that the Resolutions have been reviewed and forwarded to the Department of Defense for comment. General Clifton, who was present during our meeting with the President, also evidenced an awareness of the Guard's interests and problems. We feel now that we have

a more direct access, not alone to the President, but to the White House staff, which we hope will work to mutual advantage.

In Secretary Vance, as with Secretary of the Air Force Eugene M. Zuckert, we feel that we have a defense leader with an intimate knowledge of the National Guard program and an appreciation of our accomplishments. While again we may have occasional differences, we would hope that we shall always be in a position to express our views and receive honest and objective consideration.

Evidence of Secretary Vance's interest in the Army National Guard was an all-day visit this Summer to a State Officer Candidate School, during which it was obvious that he was genuinely interested not only in the broad problem of officer recruitment and training, but in the efforts being made in nearly every State to attract and train a large group of qualified enlisted men, thus to satisfy, in some degree, our requirement for competent and dedicated officers.

The National Guard Association of the United States is in the Nation's Capital for the purpose of representing the views of its members and to work in the best interests of the National Guard and our nearly half-million Guardsmen. In order to do this more effectively, the officers and the Headquarters staff must maintain liaison with the White House, Department of Defense, Congress, U.S. Conference of Governors, and organizations that have mutual interests. I am confident that by ever improving our liaison we will do an even more effective job for the cause we serve: a strong National defense, a strong National Guard.

We are grateful to the President for making time in an extremely busy schedule to meet with the Association's officers.

JAMES F. CANTWELL
 MAJOR GENERAL NIARNG
 PRESIDENT, NGAUS

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DEAR GUARDSMEN: Day-in, day-out, the thousands of Army and Air National Guard units keep their noses pretty close to the unexciting routine of drill and field training. Periodically, some of them will enjoy the opportunity to take part in a more exciting, "exotic" activity—participation in a joint exercise like "SWIFT STRIKE," or in transoceanic flights such as have become almost commonplace for Air Guard transport units. There may be major calls to active State or Federal service in a localized situation.

But for the Guard as a whole, by-and-large, there's a natural tendency to become preoccupied with one's own local unit's seemingly small field of activity and interest; to be unable to see the forest for the trees.

It's not until one pulls together all of the fragments of activity, and looks at them as a whole, that the impressive picture of what the National Guard of today has become comes into focus. Measured against the routines of a couple of decades ago; balanced against things that have been said and things that have been done at much higher levels, one can begin to understand and appreciate why today's National Guard stands at a high point of prestige and importance in a time of constant tension. We believe you will see this more clearly if you'll read "The National Guard: from Near-Amateur to Near-Professional," in this issue.

Artist Lou Nolan conveys the "feel" of this article in his design for our cover. —AGC