"There is a rank due to these United States among nations, which will be withheld, if not absolutely lost, by the reputation of weakness. If we desire to avoid insult, we must be able to repel it; if we desire to secure peace, one of the most powerful instruments of our rising prosperity, it must be known, that we are at all times ready for war." —President George Washington, to Congress, 3 Dec 1793

This month, the National Guard again will mark Washington’s Birthday with “Muster Day” observances across the Nation. The Guard will show what it is contributing toward our Nation’s defense. It has much to show—much to be proud of, in terms of patriotic service, higher levels of training and of combat readiness as inductees to its men are concerned. But behind the public display lies a material weakness that should cause grave concern.

Reminiscient of the coal truck “tanks” and stovepipe “mortars” of 1941 is the shocking situation that prevails—the utter lack of “HONEST JOHN” missiles and modern tanks, of the new family of rifles and machine guns; the dearth of armored personnel carriers, and self-propelled artillery, and of radars and the communications gear required to make the “Pentagon” concept work. The Active Army suffers many of the same shortages and must “make do” in the same manner with WW II vintage arms and equipment.

High policy lies behind the fact that we are far from being, as Washington urged, “an armless nation ready for war.” A Border “line” must be held. In the face of mushrooming population, unprecedented prosperity, a growing gross National Product, the Dollar is considered of far greater value than Defense.

We, or the Guardsmen who step into our shoes, are the ones whose lives will be laid on the line if Khrushchev’s mercenary mob turns from sunny to sour, or if something sparks another Korea. We have not only a right but a duty to demand 1900-model weapons for all components, for a 1960 defense.

Guardmen therefore not only should but must join in opening their friends’ and neighbors’ eyes to the needs and the strictures that must be satisfied if "we desire to secure peace, one of the most powerful instruments of our rising prosperity.”

**DEAR GUARDMEN:** With this issue, we introduce to Florida members of the NCAU, and other Florida subscribers, their own special "Florida Edition" of THE NATIONAL GUARDIAN.

Like their comrades in Alabama, Massachusetts and New York, they will receive the same monthly magazine service, but with an "extra," a center-section spread reserved exclusively for news and pictures dealing with activities of their own people and units, selected and prepared by their own "State Editor." The "Florida Edition" replaces a newspaper, tabloid-sized monthly formerly published and distributed within the State. The change to the new format fits into THE NATIONAL GUARDIAN’s pages and distribution system, cutting out the duplication effort, time and cost of separate mailing, while maintaining the "State Editor’s choice of material for publication. Perhaps other States may see the desirability of the "two-magazines-for-one" approach to giving their Guardian a fill-in on what’s going on both at the National and State levels from application of the soldier who knows what’s cooking (and why) is a better soldier.

**OUR COVER:** Told to capture the spirit of "Your National Guard—America’s Up-To-The-Minute Men," in a Muster Day poster, Artist Lou Nolan came up with the alert-looking Guardman who mas "many of the Nation’s side. Nolan’s striking portrayal of a modern Guardsman will be seen on Post Office trucks throughout February as a tribute to the Army and Air Guard.

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