THE CIVILIAN COMPONENTS POLICY BOARD

WHEN we consider the vital role the citizen-soldiers play in the defense of national security as evidenced by the contents of General George C. Marshall's great State Paper of 24 August 1944, dealing with the considerations incident to the post-war military establishment, it would seem logical and reasonable that decisions, plans and programs in connection with the organization, development and maintenance of the reserve components of the Armed Forces should be determined on the highest defense level and strictly adhered to by all concerned. With the promulgation of the Approved War Department Policies of 13 October 1944, affecting the National Guard and the Organized Reserve Corps, much time was lost in the implementation of those policies due to the reluctance or disinclination of some to accept the provisions of those policies as approved by the Secretary of War. Vain discussions and contentions were resolved only through the medium of a clarifying directive by the Chief of Staff of the Army. The enactment of the National Security Act of 1947, although a step in the right direction, nevertheless greatly complicated the organization of the Armed Forces and notably the civilian components, and certainly the end is not yet. It was extremely unfortunate, too, that there should have arisen the agitation for the Federalization of the National Guard at a time when the National Guard was acutely engaged in its own organization.

THE National Guard has for several years believed that the organization and development of the civilian components could have been enhanced very materially had there been in being a high-level committee charged with the responsibility of making decisions with reference to plans, programs and activities affecting the civilian components. It had in mind the establishment of a committee comparable to that provided in Section 5 of the National Defense Act but which would include representatives of Army, Navy, Air and their reserves, including the National Guard, and which would function directly under the Secretary of Defense. Certainly it has been obvious for some time that such an agency was highly desirable, but unfortunately nothing materialized in this respect. Had there been such an agency established, it is certain that the entire reserve program would be much further advanced and the Guard and the States would have been spared the useless and long-drawn-out deliberations of the Gray Board which served no purpose.

A VERY definite step was taken by the Secretary of Defense to fill this long-felt want when on 16 May 1949, he convened in his office a consultant group composed of representatives of the Regular establishments and the civilian components to consider and advise him in the matter of creating in the Office of the Secretary of Defense a Civilian Components Policy Board which would be charged with the responsibility, generally, of coordinating all policies, plans, programs and activities of the National Military Establishment relating to the civilian components. The group was presented with a proposed directive for this purpose which had been compiled by the Secretary of Defense. The provisions of the directive were generally acceptable to the group and after several hours of discussion they were tentatively approved, based on certain changes which had been recommended and which were accepted by the representative of the Secretary.

THE proposed Board was to consist of 20 members with a civilian Chairperson, an Executive Officer and three sections, namely, Army, Navy and Air with six members each. The Department of the Army Section would have two Regular, two Guard and two Reserve officers. The Department of the Navy Section would have one Regular, one Reserve Marine, two Naval Reserve and two Marine Reserve officers. The Department of the Air Section would have two Regular, two National Guard, and two Reserve officers.

THE National Guard representatives on the consultant group felt strongly that the conception of a Civilian Components Policy Board was indeed excellent and would not only fill a want of long standing but materially enhance the development of the civilian components of the Armed Forces and thus fortify the security of the Nation. Such a board would have the full faith and confidence of the citizen-soldiers of the Nation.