Dear Guardman:

As we've said before, we've never satisfied with our product. We keep trying for new slants, new features, typographical innovations, and what-have-you, always with the idea of putting out a better product. Occasionally...

For the past several months, we've been using an entirely different reproduction process, a new ink called "printing," but technically, it's not. For printing involves transferring ink from raised surfaces (usually metal or plastic) to the paper. The process we use is "offset," whereas a rubber cylinder deposits the ink. The process itself isn't new, but the machine we're using to do the job is new.

It's a wonderfully complicated 100,000 apparatus that does practically everything but push your doorbell and hand you your magazine. It was installed at The Telegraph Press in Harrisburg, Pa., where The NATIONAL GUARDSMAN is printed, last winter. We wore the first issue in its "run for record," with the April issue.

Let Production Editor Kenneth tell you about it:

"That first day everybody was excited—and handling the first day everybody was excited—and handling the thing was a new process and strange. The ink was instant drying, and once started the machine kept going, and the ink dried up and there is hell to pay. And the paper passes through electric driers—like a huge toaster, with all heater elements—and if it does not pass fast the paper catches fire. Well, that happened the first five minutes.

"By now the boys are used to it and there is little lost motion or confusion, and the general appearance of the magazine has improved, I think, as they go along.

"The process saves handling time. As fast as the maps came off the press, folded, they were taken over, covered with covers, trimmed, and ready to go in the mail in a few minutes. It seems unbelievable after the older method with so many processes."

Turning, if we may, from how we print to what we print, we'd like to call your attention to a couple of editorial innovations. While we're primarily military in our appeal, that doesn't mean that we have a one-track mind only. We're trying to make our magazine more accessible to the inclusion of this issue of a couple of space features. Merlen Wearinger came up with the idea of National Guard history in time to beat the deadline with a piece on Bantam Ben Hogan's amazing comeback. And for variety, see Joe Asuell Small's column, "The Great Outdoors."

"The Staff"

The Fourth of July brings to mind our forefathers' struggle for freedom. Through its field training, the National Guard fits itself to protect our hard-won independence. The first training that is photo by the 45th Division's Stg. Ronald Frye, leader of the seven-man crew of C-47B, 27th Div., Tahlequah, Okla.

"Our Cover"

We came to a small stone bandstand, around which and partially in which the crowd gathered. There were no chairs, but there was an 18-inch-high wall around the edge of the platform itself only about three feet off the ground. Two breaks on opposite sides of the octagon were served by wide stone steps; up the steps, across the bandstand, and down the other side. The steps were guarded by several firefighters as they ran. I thought perhaps someone might put a stop to this business when the "bathing program" began, but no one did. With some difficulty I found a place to sit on the wall at the rear of the bandstand. My wife sat on the side steps. A Legionnaire announced the first number as a program of the Herrington Cloans. I had seen the cloans as they made their last-minute preparations; their costumes were homemade, and I should say that the oldest cloan was about 11. They performed in front of the bandstand and out of my field of view, but apparently the act consisted of a series of casual sketches. The crowd listened quietly, except for the small boys, who continued their funfaine.