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President
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of the United States

First in Viet Nam

ALL National Guardsmen can take great pride in the outstanding performance and combat record of the mobilized Air National Guard Tactical Fighter Squadrons now deployed into South Viet Nam. The deployments went off without a hitch, and the former Air Guard F100Cs were soon in the thick of action supporting U.S. Army and Marine and Republic of Viet Nam units throughout South Viet Nam. Indications are that when current deployments are completed, the Air Guard will have a sizeable commitment of units in the air-ground war in South Viet Nam. Hundreds of other mobilized Air Guardsmen are arriving in the war zone through the individual replacement pipeline. It is expected that some former Army National Guard units and Guardsmen shortly will be deployed into the ground action.

Thus, once again in our Nation's history, the National Guard has provided the first Reserve Component units to see action in the wars of our Nation. We know that those now in Viet Nam, and those who will arrive later, will add to the rich military heritage of our National Guard and Nation, and to the illustrious record of United States military achievements.

For some of our fine Air Guard units, events subsequent to mobilization have been bitter as they suffered the agony of having highly-honed COMBAT BEEF readiness sacrificed by the break-up of the Wing and Group structures. The professional awareness of the lack of a need for deployment of the complete structure can only temper the personal heartbreak and frustration of the dedicated individuals who had devoted long hours and effort to forge a professional team, only to see their team broken-up.

But we shall not lose heart. It is only too apparent that if the World situation had taken a different turn, the Wing-Group organization would have been needed to support deployment into areas devoid of the complex support structure now found in Viet Nam. The National Guard Association's Committee on the Air National Guard is looking into the events of the mobilization, and seeing what can be done in future organization and mobilization to better guarantee unit integrity. We have shown what can be done to reach "instant readiness" in a Reserve Component—we now must seek how this resource best can be utilized in the future.

For the present, we know that wherever our mobilized Army and Air Guardsmen are, they are serving well. As National Guardsmen, it is our purpose in life to respond when our Nation or State needs us. We train to serve, and now, some of us are serving World-wide. Some tasks are more attractive than others, some more hazardous; but all will be performed to the best of our ability.

And our interest in all of you as National Guardsmen and as individuals remains strong. Your interests continue to be those of our Association. We will continue to serve you, wherever and however you may be serving our Nation.

Godspeed and good fortune!



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CONTENTS



It takes big men—not necessarily in the physical sense—to do the kind of part-time soldiering that's demanded of Army and Air Guardsmen under the unique circumstances of Alaskan life.

BIG MEN FOR A BIG LAND	2	"Summer" training in snows that would keep the tenderfoot indoors . . . caribou carcasses as their cargo, glaciers or gravel strips their landing field . . . kayaks a normal mode of conveyance . . . these are some of the things Alaska Army and Air National Guardsmen accept as the normal pattern.
THE MOBILIZATION OF '68	10	More Guardsmen in air combat over Viet Nam . . . Army Guardsmen welcomed on active duty . . . Stories and photos from mobilized units.
TECHNICIAN RETIREMENT	26	A summary of 21 years' unremitting effort to "hack a path through this legalistic jungle."
SKYBORNE SPECIALISTS	28	Alaskans, Coloradoans and Marylanders exemplify the varied training activities of the Army Guard's Special Forces troops.
AIRBORNE GUARDSMEN	31	Army Guard's only Airborne Brigade launches unusual training regimen.
IT'S "THAT TIME" AGAIN	32	Field training from a long-suffering "National Guard widow's" point of view.

DEPARTMENTS

WASHINGTON REPORT	14
YOU OUGHT TO KNOW	20
POSTING THE GUARD	34
PENTAGON PARAGRAPHS	39
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR	40

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