THE President's Page

TIME FOR EARY BIRDS

W
HEVER a member of the Headquarters Staff of the National Guard Service proposes to attend a meeting or conference of the faithful, at some place in the pro-
country, he is met with a query: What are the purposes of the Association, and what has my mem-
ership therein got me?

This question can be answered very simply, for the purposes of the Association are set forth in the Constitution of the organization, to wit:

"To promote and support adequate national security; and to foster and improve the National Guard of the United States and the Air National Guard of the United States."

The second part is not so easily answered, and unless the individual concerned can answer the ques-
tion to his own satisfaction, it is very doubtful that "we editors" can do so. As one who has been a member of the Association for some 30 years, the thought never occurred to me that the Association was established long ago and maintained all these years to give any particular individual something which would benefit him per-
sonally or, in the vernacular, give him a run for his money.

The fact remains, however, that these questions never have been answered in their entirety. Accord-
ingly, a brief of quite some magnitude has been pre-
pared, listing the accomplishments of the Association, over a period of three-quarters of a century. This summary has been distributed to the States, Territories, District of Columbia, and headquarters of major ele-
ments of the National Guard, and we venture the wish that this information will be of value to all, to make a much

with that, perhaps, will come the realization of not only what has been accomplished but how much we should owe to those of yesterday. The service which they have rendered is even more remarkable in that the service rendered over the years by the officers who served as members of the various committees received no compensation whatsoever and service, if ever, were reimbursed for expenses. As a matter of fact, it was not until 1 January 1950, that some of the officers of the Association received any compensation. In many instances, the same holds true today because so many of our people insist on contributing their services without compensation or reimbursement.

True it is, as a result of their work in promoting the National security and enhancing the National Guard through the medium of a long list of legislative enactments, very material benefits have redounded to the benefit of individual members, but that has been, in the main, purely incidental.

The National Guard and its Association have indeed come a long way since that day in 1878 when a group of volunteer officers who had served in the Union and Confederate Armies met in Richmond, Va., to discuss matters of practical reform designed to make the Organized Militia of that day a more effective instru-

In our system of National security. As a result of that meeting a National Guard Association was organized a year later at St. Louis, Mo. It is a far cry from 1878 to 1946 when it met in Nashville, N. Y., and established the Association on its present basis.

By the time this issue of THE NATIONAL GUARDIAN comes out, less than two months will remain until the commencement of a new fiscal year, and once again it will be time for the enrollment of the faithful as members of the National Guard Association for another year. Now that most of our National Guard has re-
turned from Federal service, we venture the hope that Fiscal Year 1954 will break all membership records, and we are the more encouraged by the high-water mark of 1956 when we enrolled more than 65,000, but we will enroll all of our potential of 40,000 Coincident with May Day, the annual "Early Bird" membership campaign will be underway. Last year the "Early Bird" response was quite exceptional and there is good reason to believe that this year the "Early Bird" enrollment will far exceed that of a year ago. Inepsus for the campaign will be given as a result of the meetings of the Executive Council and Standing Com-
mittee on Membership to be held in Washington 23-24 April. By the mere act of joining the "Early Bird Society" had flocked in from Delaware, Idaho, Illinois, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia, and Wisconsin. We hope that in the not too distant future practically all of our membership will be in the "Early Bird" category.

There is some satisfaction, that notwithstanding com-
plications resulting from the Korean Emergency, the membership is now said 600 in excess of last year, although approximately 1,800 short of the objective for Fiscal Year 1954 but in line with the one of yesterday. The service which they have rendered is even more remarkable in that the service rendered over the years by the officers who served as members of the various committees received no compensation whatsoever and service, if ever, were reimbursed for expenses. As a matter of fact, it was not until 1 January 1950, that some of the officers of the Association received any compensation. In many instances, the same holds true today because so many of our people insist on contributing their services without compensation or reimbursement.

True it is, as a result of their work in promoting the National security and enhancing the National Guard through the medium of a long list of legislative enactments, very material benefits have redounded to the benefit of individual members, but that has been, in the main, purely incidental.

The National Guard and its Association have indeed come a long way since that day in 1878 when a group of volunteer officers who had served in the Union and Confederate Armies met in Richmond, Va., to discuss matters of practical reform designed to make the Organized Militia of that day a more effective instru-

Our cover

Veterans who've been through it can feelsmumulty super-
rior; recruits who haven't, may get a vicarious taste of what they've missed. By now, our cover photo's subject, "Buckeye" Div trained getting a helpful of Louisiana mail on Camp Polk's Infiltiration Course. The demolition charge that just has been left off adds a touch of battlefield realism. (Army Photo)