



## "BIG PUSH"

WHATEVER is written or said about the Army Guard's falling strength and its need for a speedy injection of new manpower will tend to sound trite and repetitious. Periodically over the years since World War II, similar crises have arisen and the word has gone to the field: "Get men!" Letters, directives, and editorials such as this one, each time have been written and dispatched, as Guard leaders in Washington try to explain to Guardsmen in the field just what has happened and why large-scale recruiting is necessary.

But once the explanations have been given, responsibility for producing the required number of men shifts from Washington to Commanders on the scene, in Guard communities across the Country. All that the men at the top can do from that point on is encourage, prod, remind, suggest. The same terms, same reminders, tend to be used over and over—leadership, "total" effort, "every man get a man," command responsibility, "the Guard never has failed to attain the goals set for it," etc—because they're the only means available to the men in the "Command Post" for influencing the action taking place at the working level.

All of which brings us around to our point: that trite as the words may sound, remote as Washington and its periodic crop of exhortations may seem, the Guard's need for manpower once more is desperate and no one can deliver the badly-needed recruits except the individual Guardsman who leads a prospect into the Armory by the hand and signs him on the dotted line!

Many factors have combined to produce the Guard's decline, few of which can be blamed on the Guard itself. These we've enumerated and discussed elsewhere in this issue (See "WASHINGTON REPORT"). Some of the factors brought about the far-heavier-than-normal loss rate with which we've been afflicted since last August; others made it difficult for us to sign-up a compensating flow of new men.

At this juncture, however, two points need to be emphasized:

—That the *blame* for any failure inevitably will come to roost on the shoulders of the Guard, even though the *fault* is not ours.

—That failure to surmount our strength problems now very well may result in lower strength authorizations and smaller budgets in the years ahead.

Military Washington deals in actualities—in measurable results. Past performance tends to be forgotten quickly; tradition, *esprit*, dedication can't be measured or tabulated. There are two dozen hands waiting to grasp every dollar allocated to the Defense Establishment. The agency which fails to produce this year finds itself on a starvation diet next. When Army Guard witnesses go over to Capitol Hill to ask for a 400,000-man strength level and funds to sup-

port a force that large (and their turn comes later this month), they'll have to be able to point to an *existing* strength that's very close to that figure, or they'll never make the grade with the dollar-conscious Congressmen on the Armed Services and Appropriations Committees.

Moreover, they'll receive little support from the Pentagon. Some of the Guard's most bitter battles in recent years have been fought to prevent the Department of Defense from reducing Guard authorizations below the 400,000 level. This year, to accomplish by indirection what they never have been able to achieve by direct onslaught, Defense officials have imposed new restrictions on Guard recruiting (less flexibility in Unit overages, slightly higher intellectual standards). In addition, in the proposed FY 1964 budget, they've pegged the Army Guard at 375,000 men and requested funds to support only that number.

As long ago as last October, when ARNG strength still exceeded 380,000, Maj Gen William H. Harrison, Jr, NGAUS President, told Guard Commanders in a letter:

"We shall find it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to persuade the Congress . . . to appropriate funds for a 400,000 level for FY 1964 if we continue to be substantially understrength."

With Guard strength currently standing at about 366,000, his warning takes on greater urgency.

Going back to the repetitious terms mentioned earlier, recruiting is a responsibility of command and only exceptional leadership will inspire rank-and-file Guardsmen to beat the bushes for the men we need so badly. "Total" effort *does* pay-off, as the Air Guard proved when it reversed its own downward trend and registered a slight gain in March. Every Commander since Hannibal probably has told his troops that their ranks would soon be filled if every man brought in just one recruit . . . but it's still as appropriate as any recruiting slogan we've ever heard. Even if it is only the officers and warrant officers who each recruit one man, the Guard will reach its strength goal with a few to spare, Gen Harrison recently reminded.

It's more than a mere numbers game. Manpower is the very essence of a military unit.

In questionnaires filled-out by non-commissioned officers of a Guard Division recently, Sergeant after Sergeant cited the difficulty of providing effective training when Squads and Platoons are thinly-manned. "Half-Squads" and "half-Platoons" are barely self-supporting and are wholly ineffective from an operational standpoint. The Guard's reputation—and consequently its future well-being—is based on its ability to maintain Units that are self-sufficient and operationally effective.

That's the story. Army Guard strength is down—way down. It has to be brought up, rapidly. There's only one man who can do it—you!

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## CONTENTS

**EDITORIAL**

Inside Front Cover

**ARTICLES:**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| HOW THE ARMY GOT ITS SHOOTING HELICOPTERS . . . . .             | 2  |
| BETTER NCOS FOR THE GUARD . . . . .                             | 6  |
| "Berlin Crisis" vets discuss leadership weaknesses              |    |
| RECRUITERS' ROUNDUP . . . . .                                   | 15 |
| A summary of recruiting ideas                                   |    |
| "PARTING THOUGHTS" . . . . .                                    | 17 |
| PAY RAISE CHOPPED BACK AS ECONOMY SURGE HITS CONGRESS . . . . . | 18 |
| RECORD HOP . . . . .  | 20 |
| CONLON'S COLUMN . . . . .                                       | 27 |

**FEATURES:**

|                               |    |                                 |    |
|-------------------------------|----|---------------------------------|----|
| You Ought to Know . . . . .   | 5  | Technical & Tactical . . . . .  | 23 |
| Washington Report . . . . .   | 12 | Posting the Guard . . . . .     | 24 |
| Pentagon Paragraphs . . . . . | 22 | Letters to the Editor . . . . . | 31 |

**DEAR GUARDSMEN:** We've said many times before, one place or another, that your copy of THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN every month is a tool of the Guardsman's trade—especially those who make the Guard their fulltime career.

Many's the Guardsman, visiting us in our Memorial offices, or encountered in random travels, who has volunteered the same comment. We just can't pass-up this chance to reiterate the point, "for the information and guidance of all concerned." It's occasioned by a change-of-address letter to our Circulation Dept, on which Sgt Ronald S. Himelblau added this unsolicited remark:

"In closing I would like to add that since subscribing to your magazine I have found many articles that are entertaining and helpful to me as an Administrative Supply Technician for the State of New Jersey. Do continue your excellent job of reporting the facts and deficiencies concerning the life of the National Guardsman."

It's a comment Commanders well might pass along, not just to their "Astecs," but to all their EM as well. —AGC