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National Guard Association  
of the United States

## The President's Report

As prepared for presentation to the 91st General Conference, National Guard Assn. of the U.S.

As an Association and as the Nation's primary Reserve Force, we have accomplished much in the past two or three years, more than we credit ourselves with, perhaps.

We saw a new kind of conflict erupt in the ghettos of our cities, on the campuses of our Nation's colleges, and in the streets of towns large and small. We found ourselves thrown into the breach, to bring violence to an end and to restore order, long before the intensity and altered character of this confrontation was recognized.

We restored order. We brought the burning and looting to an end in city after city. We analyzed the new and more violent techniques of the dissenting factions, and altered our own tactics accordingly. We helped civil authorities devise their own altered responses to riots and disorder. We performed our unpleasant and unfamiliar tasks, I believe, with restraint, fairness and effectiveness. We accomplished all this under great pressure and in an atmosphere that often bordered on panic.

Concurrently, we

- Reorganized the entire Army National Guard
- Launched an extensive retraining program for our reorganized elements
- Sent a sizable force of both Army and Air Guardsmen to active duty, and
- Maintained our high-priority Selected Reserve Force at a high level of readiness.

This is not a record for which we need apologize. You know the prodigious effort that went into those accomplishments for, to paraphrase the Guardsman's creed, "You are the Guard. . . . you were there." You wrestled with the heavier demands on your time, the equipment shortages, the problems in training and administration and communications that seemed to have no solutions. In most cases, you found solutions by one expedient or another because that is the spirit which makes the Guard what it is. It surmounts all obstacles and gets the job done.

We can take particular pride in the performance of National Guard units, Army and Air, on active duty and in combat. Nearly 23,000 Guardsmen were ordered into Federal service, in two increments, early in 1968. By the end of May, the first of the Air Guard units was in Viet Nam and flying combat missions—Colorado's 120th Tactical Fighter Squadron. Other units followed, Army and Air, along with several thousand Guardsmen reassigned individually as replacements to Army and Air Force units. Still others were sent to Korea, to Japan, and to dozens of U.S. bases overseas and here in the continental United States.

Individually and as units, they performed magnificently. Active Army/Air Force commanders said that the Guardsmen knew their jobs, that they were highly professional, and that their attitude was outstanding.

Many of the commanders of those units are present at this Conference . . . They, and all the thousands of Guardsmen they represent, served their Nation well. In doing so, they brought credit and stature to the entire National Guard. For that, we owe them our gratitude.

There were aspects to the handling of our units on active duty that we didn't like. Units were broken up and thousands of Guardsmen reassigned, individually, as replacements to Active units. Units and parts of units were left to wait, and wonder, and mark time after mobilization when, with better planning, they could have been employed more productively. Explanations of personnel and reassignment policies in many cases were inadequate, leading to resentment and bitterness when it could have been avoided. Mistakes were made. Planning was haphazard in some cases, and judgment poor in others.

These were called to the attention of Army and Air Force officials in the Pentagon as they became known but, in most cases, it was too late by then to alter the pattern.

Out of all this, however, several points emerge which we should not lose sight of.

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