



# The President's Report

*The report of Major General William H. Harrison, Jr., President, National Guard Association of the United States, to the 84th General Conference of the Association, Denver, Colo., 17 September 1962*

FOR the third time in 40 years—almost half a century—the National Guard Association of the United States has selected Denver, the gem of the Rocky Mountain Country, as the site of its annual General Conference.

As we convene in this historic and representative metropolis of the Old West in the midst of nature's magnificence, we are reminded of the dangers and hardships encountered and overcome by our pioneer forebears who expanded the frontiers of a young republic to the shores of the Pacific. In startling contrast to those days, when transportation and communications over the vast distances encompassed within our borders was measured in months and weeks, we are today confronted with the dangers and vexing problems presented in a World where advancing technology reckons travel in hours or minutes, and communications in split seconds.

It is curious to note the coincidental circumstances under which we gathered here for the 74th General Conference 10 years ago and those which now obtain.

In the Fall of 1952, hundreds of units and thousands of men of the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard were being released from active Federal service following the Korean Conflict. Today, as we assemble, history repeats itself with remarkable similarity as units and men of the Army National Guard and Air National Guard are being returned to civilian life as a result of the termination of the buildup required by the Berlin Crisis.

Curiously coincidental, also, is the fact that at the time of the Korean mobilization, the National Guard contributed from its inventory hundreds of millions of dollars of arms, equipment and materiel for the use of the Active Forces—an operation which likewise was repeated for the Berlin buildup.

You may recall that the Korean Emergency, as it was first termed, was to be an exclusively Active Forces affair. Nevertheless, before its weary wind-up, the Nation found it necessary to call from their homes, families and civilian occupations, hundreds of thousands of Guardsmen to confront a determined and ruthless enemy thousands of miles from our shores.

Almost before the American guns in Korea had begun to cool, Pentagon leaders developed plans proposing tre-

mendous increases in the National Guard and other Reserve Forces. Yet, before these ambitious programs had even been digested, the now-discredited theory of "massive retaliation" became the guiding influence of our National defense. Thereunder, conventional forces and Reserves were characterized as old-fashioned and unnecessary, and shabby treatment accorded these forces during that time was further reflected in attempts to make slashing reductions in the Army National Guard.

Apparently transfixed by push-button warfare, soaring rockets and nuclear warheads, our Nation was almost committed to total reliance on these techniques for defense.

Meanwhile, our enemies, taking natural advantage of our announced intention not to fire the first nuclear missile, continued their steady encroachment on the Free World.

During this period, ours, with but a few others, was a voice crying in the wilderness. We recognized the vital importance of continuing research and supremacy in the field of sophisticated weaponry, but called for corresponding development and support of conventional force capabilities sufficient to provide a proper "mix" and an adequate degree of flexibility.

An incoming new Defense Team in the Spring of 1961 suddenly was confronted with the fact that adequate conventional forces did not then exist in sufficient size and character—that we had forfeited our freedom of action and choice in stubborn reliance on push-button retaliation. It was patently apparent that we, as a Nation, had failed to keep an important part of our powder dry, and had been almost fatally charmed by thermonuclear devices and their delivery systems.

In recognition of these obvious circumstances, President Kennedy, during the first few weeks of his Administration, announced sweeping programs and new goals designed to correct this situation, and to increase our conventional capabilities to a point where the Nation would be provided the degree of flexibility required to meet fluctuating international tensions.

The National Guard greeted these moves with enthusiasm and relief, recognizing them to be a complete justification

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**DEAR GUARDSMEN:** Guardsmen do get around. The Oxford, Miss, difficulties (given staff coverage in this issue) point-up that fact.

Of course, most directly involved was the Mississippi National Guard. Though not clearly brought out in Press reports from a chaotic scene, fact is that the "Army" units first and most actively engaged in restoration of law and order were National Guard Armored Cavalry and Infantry.

Wholly coincidental was the fact that a one-time DC National Guardsman—Gen Earle C Wheeler—assumed his office as Chief of Staff of the Army, with top responsibility for the military aspects of the Oxford operation immediately in his lap, at the height of the trouble.

Finally, when the Editor of "THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN"—an active DC Guardsman—went to Oxford to "staff" the story and phoned Deputy Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach for comment on the Guard's efforts, answering the phone at the elbow of the Justice Dept's No. 2 man was another Guardsman—Capt Bob Donlan, CO of the DC's Co B, 163d MP Bn, a Justice Dept attorney in civilian life!

Small world, ain't it?

—AGC

**OUR COVER:** Masked against lingering fumes from a hectic night's concentration of tear gas, troops of the Mississippi National Guard police the "Ole Miss" campus after helping disperse rioting thousands. These men of the 1st Battle Group, 155th Infantry, reinforced Troopers of the Guard's 108th Armored Cavalry—first military units on the scene—Active Army units and embattled US Marshals.

—(Wide World Photos)