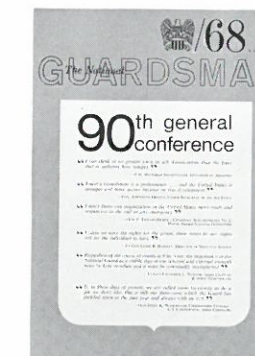


GUARDSMAN

The National

NOVEMBER XXII 11

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An inkling of how others see the Guard is conveyed through comments by military and civilian leaders alike at the 90th NGAUS Conference.

"BEAUTIFUL! BEAUTIFUL!" 2

Paying perhaps the highest compliment possible, a FAC shouts his praise for an exceptional air strike—made by an Air Guardsman in Viet Nam.

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NOVEMBER, 1968

I RECENTLY took time to read the official Proceedings of several past General Conferences. I was struck by the similarity of matters under consideration at one, which the record shows to have been a particularly significant gathering, and some of the matters that are before us now.

The 355 Delegates to that particular Conference were concerned with many problems—which just goes to show that problems are nothing new to our organization. But, foremost in everyone's mind was the preservation of the State character of the National Guard. A great deal of the time at that Conference was devoted to a study of legislative proposals which, it was felt, would lead eventually to a wholly Federal Reserve Force. A proposal to grant dual commissions to National Guard officers was debated.

Incidentally, it was not until five years after that Conference that the legislative proposals, which even at the time of that Conference had been under consideration for several years, were enacted into law. Even in those relatively calm and placid times, the legislative wheels turned slowly.

The first organized unit of the Army Reserve—it was called the Organized Reserve Corps in those days—had just come into being as a full-strength organization. It was, incidentally, disbanded subsequently, and it was not until after World War II that the Army Reserve acquired any appreciable number of organized units. There was strong objection to a proposal to establish a Reserve Division in the War Department.

In the course of discussion on the very important matter of Federal control of the Militia, as the National Guard still was known at that time, a young Brigadier General from the State of Maryland arose towards the close of the Conference and asked if he might have "just a moment" to make a statement clarifying discussion on the subject. He articulated without notes, and the record indicates he did indeed clear up a number of points confusing to some of the Delegates.

That Brigadier General is with us today—hale, though somewhat advanced in grade as well as in age—and I refer of course to our own Lt Gen Milton A. Reckord.

There was great agitation to increase the strength of the National Guard, which even then was an authorized 400,000, but because of limitation of funds its actual strength was only 190,000.

There was a complaint that "members of the Association weren't getting the word" and another from the Secretary of the Association that the States "were not responding to letters asking for information or comment on important matters." How familiar these statements are!

This still is a plaint, although our communications have improved vastly since those days, both from the Bureau and the Association. The Association's official publication, "THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN;" its Press Service, and its Newsletter, are just some of the media which strive to keep our members informed.

A Resolution was adopted urging increased gas and oil for "heavier-than-air" Squadrons of the National Guard. Another called for an increased allocation of "horses of suitable age and condition."

The Militia Bureau advised that not more than two motorcycles could be made available in peacetime for each organized Motorcycle Company. Still the same old fight for equipment!

The Bureau further advised that the ration would be held at 50¢ per day, with the provision that in some western States, because of a lack of storage and refrigeration facilities, it would be 52¢. It further advised that there would be a limited issue of rolled collar uniforms for our enlisted personnel.

The Chief of the Militia Bureau urged that one member of the Senate and one Member of the House "friendly to the National Guard" be asked to serve as spokesmen for the National Guard, on Capitol Hill, noting, "there are many splendid gentlemen in both Houses of Congress very friendly to the National Guard, but a lot of them don't know our problems and if you

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The President's Report

to the 90th General Conference
National Guard Assn. of the U.S.