AS WE SEE IT

The Mark of a Champion!

By every year since 1948, the Army National Guard has chosen its best units and honored them with the highest award it can bestow: an Eisenhower Trophy—one for each State, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

Because the trophy represents solid achievement in the whole broad field of military proficiency, it has acquired a status which many awards in this trophy-wacky age never can achieve. In the Guard, the Eisenhower Trophy has become a prized symbol of the real champion, the unit which performs every one of its several important functions in a superior manner.

Sometimes, though, its significance is forgotten in the average unit's head-expanse of recruiting, training, and community service; and the accomplishments of the winning units are overlooked.

More than any other award now offered ARNG units for distinguished performance in a variety of fields, the "Ike" Trophy signifies a triumph for the whole Company, or Battery, or Troop, and for each individual member of that unit. It is, given for not a single outstanding performance in one lone military skill, but for a year-long effort in every field. Brought into the computations when the winners are chosen, for example, are such factors as:

—Potential military usefulness as represented by its strength in manpower and by the percentage of those men who attend drills and field training regularly.

—Operational capabilities as reflected by the overall rating earned during annual field training.

—Tactical self-sufficiency as shown by the number of its members who can use their personal weapons proficiently.

—The quality of its administrative, supply, transport and communications procedures as measured during annual armory inspections.

The unit which wins an Eisenhower Trophy is the best unit in its State in every sense of the word, because no unit that was weak in even one of the fields enumerated could hope to meet the exacting criteria on which the award is based.

The award is a personal triumph for the Commander because no unit can hope to develop the caliber of teamwork required of an Ike Trophy winner without leadership of the highest order. It's equivalent to a mark of honor for each member of the winning unit. Private and Platoon Sergeant, Tailman and Supply Clerk—because no organization can maintain peak military proficiency over an extended period of time unless every man is pulling his share of the load every day.

In fact, it is sustained high performance over an extended period of time which counts for most when the trophy scores are tabulated. Like the old fable of the tortoise and the hare, it's not the flashy bursts of speed that count so much as it is dependable, consistent, steady accomplishment, an axiom developed by military men long before units received such marks of recognition as the Ike Trophy.

The Eisenhower Trophy has acquired luster and prestige because it stands for two overlapping qualities which are the basic reasons for the Guard's very existence, military effectiveness and battlefield readiness.

To all of the winners—and the units as such, to the individual members thereof, and to the Commanders—we extend congratulations for achievements which are in the Guard's finest tradition.

Special mention should be made of the units which were repeaters. The 226 AAA (RCAT) Det commanded by Lt. Warren W. Reed, for instance, was Nevada's Ike Trophy winner for the fifth consecutive year. Several others posted their fourth successive win, some units made it three years in a row and still others took home their second cup. Some of these also had won additional trophies in earlier years, giving them a consistent three- or four-year standing as solid citizens in the military family.

We remember, in the days before WW II brought its bumper crop of medals, ribbons and commendations, when the one of the greatest tributes you could pay an Army man was to say of him: "You gotta hand it to him—he's a damned good soldier!"

So, adding our little bit to the well-deserved recognition they've already received, we say to the Guardsmen whose efforts won an Eisenhower Trophy for their units: "We've gotta hand it to you—you're a bunch of damned fine soldiers!"