CHANGE AT THE TOP

WHEN THE leadership of the National Guard Bureau switched, late in August, from Army Guardman Donald W. McGowan to Air Guardman Winstan P. Wilson, army newspaper accounts of the shift mentioned that Gen. Wilson was the first Air Officer to assume the Chief's job in the Bureau's 43-year history.

This could have been construed by some—though it was unintended, we're sure—that Air was gaining ascendancy over Army, or that old ways were giving way to new, or merely that the Air side had won the right to rule by virtue of its spectacular performance during and since the Berlin Blockade and to its recent deployments. Any such oppositions is correct doesn't matter very much. Americans like to read between the lines, to dig out the "real story," and erroneous opinions about a change in Bureau leadership will be forgotten quickly.

That is really significant about the change from Gen. McGowan to Gen. Wilson is that in their years of joint service in the Bureau—each initially as Chief of his own "side" and more recently as Chief and Deputy, respectively—each had gained an intimate knowledge of the other component's problems, capabilities and limitations. Yes, Army Guard and Air Guard have their distinctive characteristics and problems, but they share a common origin and in the uniqueness—which is largely the secret of their strengths—of their State as well as Federal ties. This has been reflected all the way up and down the line, throughout the Bureau.

Much has been done to benefit and improve the Air Guard during an Army Guardman's tenure, and today, Army Guardmen feel confident that "the green suit" will benefit from an Air Guardman's service as Chief.

When Gen. McGowan brought his military career to a close after 47 busy, productive years, both the Secretary of Air Force, Eugene M. Zuckert, and the Air Force Chief of Staff, Gen. Curtis E. LeMay (the latter no man to skewer—undeserved praise) saw fit to pay glowing tributes to the former Jersey Cavallyman for his "impartial and well-considered" relation to the Air, as well as the Army, Guard.

When "Wimpy" Wilson winds up his own stint as Bureau Chief, we feel confident he'll receive a comparable farewell from the Army's top leadership.

This interplay of efforts and loyalties reflects on the Guard itself, Army and Air, for it bequeaths a unity of purpose, unity of effort and unity of aspiration that transcends Service lines.

The Guard is a product of its Nation, but it also is a product of the 50 States, not merely as a manifestation of States' Rights but of States' responsibilities. Guardians do not stand as a guaranty, as a mutual defense force, of any other State or territory, but of their own. Each and all of us, in the Guard, must do our utmost to make sure that the Guard is as strong as possible, as well as steadfast as was our mutual defense force, of any other State or territory, but of their own. Each and all of us, in the Guard, must do our utmost to make sure that the Guard is as strong as possible, as well as steadfast.

This change of command has been made in the interests of the Guard, not so much as a change in leadership (though it is that) as a change to meet new threats and challenges in the world of today.

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DEAR GUARDMEN: We never cease to marvel at the diversity and unbelievable variety—in missions, in training experiences, in capabilities—that today's National Guard represents. Last issue, we told of Army Guardsmen flying to Alaska for ski training. In this issue, we have Air Guardsmen jetting non-stop from Alabama to Alaska to take photos for the USAF (page 2); other Air Guardsmen transporting Reservists to Europe for ANACDUTRA (page 27); and the ANG's fleet of global transport aircraft increasing to 216 (page 22). In future issues, you'll read of "Sky Cavalry" riding "copters into "battle" with the Army Guard in Texas, and Washington ANGcrees operating a fleet of lift and floating machine shops on Puget Sound. And this doesn't even take into account NIKE missile sites manned fulltime by Guardsmen; Guard Sikorsky Scouts prowling the Arctic on Army missions, and thousands of Guardsmen of both Army and Air flying to field training as a matter of course, in the Guard's own plane. And to think that many of us still can remember wrap leggings, "barack" bags, and, shades of "Hell's Angels," goggles and leather helmets!—WDM

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