



THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN

The magazine of . . . by . . . and for National Guardsmen



CHANGE AT THE TOP

WHEN THE leadership of the National Guard Bureau switched, late in August, from Army Guardsman Donald W. McGowan to Air Guardsman Winston P. Wilson, 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 for awhile by its spectacular performance during and since the Berlin Crisis. That none of these suppositions 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.

What 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 in a common origin and in the uniqueness—which is largely the secret of their strength—of their State as well as Federal ties. This has been reflected all the way up and down the line, throughout the Guard.

Much has been done to benefit and improve the Air Guard during an Army Guardsman's tenure, and today, Army Guardsmen feel confident that "the green suit" will benefit from an Air Guardsman'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 strew-around undeserved praise) saw fit to pay glowing tributes to the former Jersey Cavalryman for his "impartial and selfless devotion" 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 interchange of efforts and loyalties reflects on the Guard itself, Army and Air, for it bespeaks 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. Guardsmen draw strength of purpose, as well as more material aid, from both sources.

Where, in the wholly Federal reserve structure, can you find men who'll labor with equal intensity in behalf of each other's parent Service as wholeheartedly as Guardsmen do as a matter of course? Where else does a triumph such as the Air Guard scored with its Berlin Crisis mass deployment cause such jubilation among Army men as it did among thousands of Army Guardsmen? Where else will men in Air Force blue speak out so quickly and strongly in behalf of their green-clad Army comrades as when Air Guardsmen pitch-in to help their Army Guard friends beat down another slash in strength?

Guardsmen believe in the One-Army and One-Air Force concepts, and feel a loyalty to the Service whose uniform they wear. For older Guardsmen this feeling of "belonging" to the Army or Air Force stems in large part from wartime associations during WW II or Korea. For the younger crop of Guardsmen, it comes from the Service identification they build-up during full-time duty at Basic Training Centers.

We're proud of the uniforms we're privileged to wear, proud of the ribbons, many or few, that are partial measures of the service we have rendered.

But interwoven with this loyalty to our parent Service is a deep dedication to the Guard and to our own States—and we do not think, as some seem to feel, that the two are incompatible. We regard it, not as a split loyalty but as a joint loyalty.

It unites us in common cause when, in the bustle of a part-military, part-civilian life, our links with the Army and Air Force are weakened by infrequent contact. It helps bring both the grassroots support and the more tangible assistance from our own communities that we must have to stay strong. And it enables us to submerge narrow differences of Service outlook in a deeper ideal.

The Guard has surmounted every problem that has faced it, and built a modern, effective, supplement for both the Army and Air Force—largely, we believe, because of the spirit that's embodied in the McGowan-Wilson succession.

We're soldiers and airmen and Guardsmen, and who's in charge matters less than what's the best course of action for all!

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DEAR GUARDSMEN: 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 transports increasing to 216 (page 22). In future issues, you'll read of Armored "Sky Cavalry" riding 'copters into "battle" with the Army Guard in Texas, and Washington ARNGers operating a fleet of tugboats and floating machine shops on Puget Sound. And this doesn't even take into account NIKE missile sites manned fulltime by Guardsmen; Guard Eskimo 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 planes. And to think that many of us still can remember wrap leggings, "barracks" bags, and, shades of "Hell's Angels," goggles and leather helmets! —WDM

OUR COVER: High over Alaska, Wisconsin KC97 refuels Alabama jet recon RF84F in first, all-Guard, nonstop deployment of ANG jets to Alaska. Illinois and New Hampshire aerial tankers took their turns in in-flight refueling of their 'Bama comrades in memorable Project MINUTEMAN ALFA. Story of notable flight is told in this issue.