EIGHTY YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE THE DICK ACTS

Sometimes it takes the exertion of effort to remind ourselves of how far we have come as an Association in our work in behalf of the National Guard. A list appears on Page 97 of this Yearbook edition of NATIONAL GUARD.

More than a year ago, we appointed a special committee of very senior Guardsmen to dig back through the Association and construct a compilation of the accomplishments of the Association over its 110-year history. We knew this would be a lengthy list, particularly in recent years. A few observations about this list are in order.

First, it sometimes is instructive to point out the origins of this Association to explain the great difficulties and frustrations it experienced in its first 25 years. It is clear from that the National Guard success stories were sparse indeed in the first quarter century.

Of course, though the largely years of peace as we would define that today. The period 1876-1898 was a time of expansion of the frontiers and exploration and development of the West. It is true that there were numerous Indian wars in the territories, but these were not nearly the extent that by the Guard was composed of Civil War veterans and newly arrived immigrants.

It is often mentioned that the Mexican-American War of 1898 which demonstrated the ill-preparedness of the nation for mobilization.

That mobilization should have occurred in 1898. It didn’t by the exigency of the legislation, or at least some of it, that had been requested by the National Guard over the years, had not been enacted by Congress despite the National Guardsmen’s pleas and the fact that the National Guard, then and today, is organized to provide a united representation before Congress in behalf of Guardsmen everywhere.

This year, the National Guard celebrates the 80th and 85th birthdays of two famous Dick Acts of 1903 and 1908. These two laws, whose significance has been discussed at other times on these pages, were really the first significant accomplishments of the National Guard. They came about because of the fortuitous convergence in one man, Major General Charles M. Dick, of these statutes: member of Congress (later senator), commanding general of the Ohio National Guard and National Guardsman president.

When you look at the list of accomplishments of the National Guard that begin on Page 97, you find the Dick Acts of 1903 and 1908 as the cornerstones of what we know today as the Total Force. They provided a sound basis for the federal mission of the Guard on the first steps toward today’s full partnership in the Total Force.

Of course, much has transpired since that landmark legislation in the years of actual enactment of the Guard’s mission for the development of the Guard’s full partnership in the Total Force. Of course, much has transpired since that landmark legislation in the years of actual enactment of the Guard’s mission for the development of the Guard’s full partnership in the Total Force.

Protecting those legislative goals have been defensive in nature. Defeat of the Continental Army Plan in 1915 followed the participation of the National Guard in the National Defense Act of 1916 that made it clear the Guard was the national military organization of the Army “when in federal service.”

The National Guard Act of 1920 was a law much on our minds in the late 1980s because it is the statute that created the National Guard of the United States. This is the mobilized National Guard, has been the legal basis of the Guard’s organization for the mobilization of the Guard in the years since World War II.

As accomplishments, the National Guard can cite:

• Guard and Reserve retirement.

The United States is the only nation known to have a retirement system for its Guard and Reserve that is based on active duty retirement.

• Creation of the National Guard Bureau as the joint Army and Air Force executive agency in the Department of Defense for administration of National Guard and requiring the chief be a National Guard officer at least the grade of major general.

• The Technical Act of 1938 that provided a watershed act for the early years of effort to provide a suitable and adequate retirement program for the Guard’s full-time force.

What was found was to put our military forces onto the Civil Service System, while the same system were finding their essential mission by requiring them to be be of the Guard in a manner that was governed by military regulations and the orders of theiradjutant general.

• The GI Bill. One of the great accomplishments of the 1980s was the passage of the “GI Bill,” named the Montgomery GI Bill, its primary sponsor, Rep. James E. “Jim” McGovern, D-Mass.

For the first time, the GI Bill of educational benefits became part of National Guard service provided to what was provided to active and reserve service.

The 1980s have seen an increasing effectiveness of our Association. This has been in large part because the leadership members are increasingly active in the Association’s work and in its affairs. Our strength, the influence of our organization that permits of representation through the voices of our members in the 84 states and territories.

The Legislative Action Plan, but has included an extensive history of all the Association’s legislative accomplishments since the enactment of the first Dick Act.