

## The Guard's Greatest Challenge



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AT this time of each year, Americans generally recognize that a transition is taking place. Cartoonists like to picture it with a tired old man leaning on a scythe and giving way to the babe in diapers being carried by a stork. Newspapers wrap up the activities of the expiring year, with summaries of outstanding events. Holidays are scheduled to "ring out the old and bring in the new." We reflect on what the last year brought us and resolve that things will be different in the next.

It is a time to write in columns such as this of challenge, of the tasks that lie ahead, of overcoming problems. When you have done this, as I frequently have done on this page, these words seem to beget a somewhat hollow ring. But they are, indeed, proper words. So I am impelled to write at the start of another year—the year in which my tenure as President of our Association will end—that the National Guard is faced with challenge, perhaps its greatest.

It is called upon to maintain authorized strengths in a zero-Draft situation. Both the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard will be hard-pressed to do so. But that challenge must be met because the Guard in this situation is called upon to attain higher levels of readiness as essential elements of the Nation's defense force. This is the challenge; these are the tasks. There are problems to overcome. If usage and time have worn these phrases too smooth, they must be written, for I find no substitutes that better describe our situation.

We in the National Guard are doing our part. The National Guard Bureau and the NGAUS spotlighted the retention and recruiting problems more than a year ago. The Adjutants General gave it further emphasis in their meetings through the year. The NGB has held recruiting workshops, and States have followed suit. Recruiting officers have been appointed to coordinate efforts at State level. Recruiting stations have been set up at major Army discharge points. Recruiters at local levels are hard at it.

The Army and the Defense Department have furnished some help, but more will be needed, principally incentives. The NGAUS continues to press the DoD and the Congress for reenlistment bonus, survivor benefits, early retirement. We look for favorable action on at least some of these proposals in 1972.

The Guard rarely has been without challenge. It has proved its ability to solve problems. But as the demands of the Federal Government become heavier and more complex in terms of readiness, missions and weaponry, we expect to be treated as equals with the Active Forces in funding and support. If "Total Force" is something more than a phrase, as Secretary Laird insists it is; if greater reliance is placed on the Reserve Components to take up the slack in defense posture resulting from cuts in the Active Forces, we look for our efforts to be supported more realistically by the Active Services. The "Total Force" is not a concept that gives welcome to poor relations.



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Variety of weaponry that Israel is manufacturing in its yearning for military/industrial self-sufficiency is indicated by our cover.

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