

# GUARDSMAN

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**T**HERE are many critical steps in the legislative process, not the least of which is the Departmental Report. After a Bill is introduced and referred to the appropriate committee of Congress, the Department of the Executive Branch which has primary concern is asked for its position. Getting that report can take a long time because it involves much coordination with agencies within and without the Department, including budgetary clearance.

Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird's announcement of his departmental support of certain incentives for membership in the National Guard and other Reserve Forces (see "Washington Report") is welcome news. The DoD thus is committed to favorable action on important legislative proposals which this Association has been advocating for several years. His status report on other elements of the incentive package we consider essential is also encouraging.

The move towards a reenlistment bonus for the National Guard and other Reserves first came some years ago when Rep. F. Edward Hébert, then Chairman of the Reserve Panel of the Armed Services Committee, introduced legislation calling for a \$400 re-up bonus.

In the First Session of the current Congress, Rep. G. V. "Sonny" Montgomery of Mississippi introduced a Bill calling for a \$1,000 re-up bonus, with \$200 additional payments for each of three years of service completed. The DoD Bill will offer about half that amount for a like period of enlistment or reenlistment.

The importance to be noted now is that a big milestone has been passed in the lengthy legislative procedure from introduction of a measure to its passage. There is still a long way to go—hearings to be held on each Bill, testimony and statements to be heard and read, committee staff work, committee votes, floor debate, and final votes, with possible joint committee compromises along the way. But none of these steps would be likely without the favorable action by the Secretary of Defense. Now the process can get moving.

We recognize the many hours of work within the DoD that went into the decision recommending favorable action on the three incentives Bills and other measures which Secretary Laird has indicated probably will be reported favorably.

We commend the Department for initiatives taken to assist the National Guard and Reserves in trying to meet prescribed force levels. We likewise are mindful of the considerable interest by a number of Members of the Congress in providing incentives to assist the Guard and Reserve in retention and recruiting. A number of these are members of the Armed Services Committees and we hope for their continued support.

Now that movement is afoot, the greatest lift to the retention and recruiting efforts of Guardsmen will be momentum given by the Congressional committees. We solicit their help in providing the stimulus necessary to boost the National Guard and Reserves toward attainment of prescribed strength goals. ♦



MG James F. Cantwell  
President

National Guard Association  
of the United States

## Welcome News



Tank gunnery training poses similar problems for the Active Army and the Army Guard. The cover photo shows Illinois Armored Cavalrymen on the range.

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