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## AS WE SEE IT

### LET THE TROOPS ALONE!

THE individual "filler" is and from time immemorial has been a lost soul.

This fact of military life is well known to anyone who personally has been through, or exposed to the product of, a "repple depple."

Whether a draftee who's been processed through a series of receiving and induction stations and replacement training units, or a reservist plucked out of a pool, he "belongs" nowhere until the System finally places him in a unit. And then it's a while before he adjusts to new faces and a new environment, finds his place in the scheme of things, and begins to feel that he has comrades and a home.

Unfortunately, out of some 150,000 Guardsmen and other reservists ordered to active duty in response to the Communist threat, a mere handful had griped. And their complaints—seized-upon eagerly and stimulated avidly by a few headline-seekers—had been exaggerated, magnified, publicized and treated with an importance far, far beyond their real weight.

It was a source of embarrassment, deep annoyance and hot resentment for tens of thousands of Guardsmen, for the gripers were identified with major National Guard units. Unpublicized in the first blasts was the fact that these were newcomers—not Guardsmen.

It didn't help that a major metropolitan newspaper had reported that Guardsmen and Reservists would be held in service beyond the 12 months specified when they were ordered-up. That was hotly denied by no less responsible a source than the President himself—but denials rarely undo the damage executed by a false report.

It didn't help that a ranking officer in one of the reserve components publicly declared that the crisis was over and that the citizen-soldiers should be sent home.

What were the most general and specific complaints? They ranged from serious to silly. Equipment shortages. Decrepit barracks. Lack of uniforms. No sheets. No TV set in the Day Room! Poor chow. Nothing to do. No training. "Why didn't you pick on somebody else instead of me?"

Yes, there were some equipment shortages. It's been no secret that the Army has been frustrated for years in its efforts to get enough funds not only to replace its WW II and Korean War vintage hardware with the up-to-date tools it needs, but to make up for normal destruction, damage and wear-out of those it already had. Most every Guardsman understood fully that at home station, it was neither necessary nor desirable to maintain war-strength

levels; that after arrival at mobilization stations, it inevitably would take a little time to ship in additional items. But in the meantime, with planning, equipment on hand could be and was rotated from unit to unit in accordance with well-established practices, with no detriment to training.

Decrepit barracks? In some cases, unquestionably true; in others, not at all. Unmentioned were the not-rare instances where units moved into modern, clean, permanent barracks. Unfortunately, in other instances, 20-year-old frame barracks that are satisfactory for two weeks of Summertime field training are pretty grim for semipermanent occupancy. But WW II veterans with lasting memory of "winterized" tents, sooty, spark-ejecting tent stoves, and a never-ending series of tent fires; of pup tents and fox-holes, found it hard to shed tears with the crybabies.

Lack of uniforms? Every filler, upon release from his active duty hitch, took his uniform home with him, with the instruction that if the whistle blew, he was to put it on. If he no longer had it, why not? If he'd outgrown it (and waistlines *do* tend to expand), that was a different matter.

No sheets? No comment!  
No TV in the Day Room? How silly can you get?

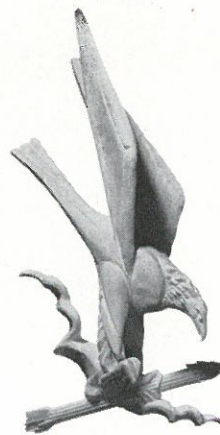
Nothing to do? No training? To the tens of thousands who were working their tails off from morning to night, *this* was a dilly. True, in the first week or so, with a thousand-and-one administrative details of individual processing to be completed and settling-in to be done, some individuals had some idle moments. With a few rare exceptions—a Base Post Office, maybe some other specialized-type units—the Nationwide picture showed both combat and support-type outfits going full blast.

Poor chow? Oh, our aching backs. Was there ever any outfit, anywhere, in any Army, in which someone, sometime, didn't bellyache about the chow?

"Why pick on me instead of some other guy?" *Who* else? Listen, Bub: you were picked because you had (and have) an obligation.

The sources of the complaints—the individual fillers—and the nature of their gripes (and in particular, a root cause—their lack of understanding of why they were called)—struck a reminiscent chord in the minds of Guardsmen who remembered the debates incident to various over-ambitious plans launched, and only partially accomplished, in the past decade, to build-up immense Reserve Forces. The plans for the use of masses of individuals from the Ready Reserve and, in all-out war, the Standby

—Continued On Inside Back Cover



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**DEAR GUARDSMEN:** We're very proud of our National Guard Memorial, and we're happy to have the opportunity to show it off to all comers.

For the past several months, we've experimented with manning the Memorial between 10 a. m. and 4 p. m. every Saturday and Sunday to accommodate Guardsmen (or the general public) who might find themselves in Washington only on a weekend. We haven't tried to compute the dollars and cents cost, per visitor, for manning, heating and lighting a good-sized structure; frankly, we'd be half-scared to try, for the number of visitors has been small and the cost has been large.

At any rate, it's been found wise and economical to modify the system. We won't stay open at set hours, waiting for visitors to wander in. We WILL be delighted to make special arrangements to meet and escort Guardsmen who will give fair advance notice of the date and time they'd like to see the Memorial on a weekend visit. Drop a line to the Executive Assistant, National Guard Assn of the US, 1 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington 1, DC. —AGC

**OUR COVER:** Not since World War II had there been such a shift of jet fighters to an overseas area as the one staged in early November by Air Guard units under Tactical Air Command control, but the fleet of F84Fs lined-up on the ramp at Harmon Air Base, Newfoundland (photo on front cover) had even greater significance—never before had a US Reserve Force been able to respond so quickly or so efficiently as when the Air National Guard moved from part-time operations at home to fulltime operations in Europe in a scant 30 days.

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