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A STATE GUARD/STATE DEFENSE FORCE ADVISORY RESERVE

COL Martin Hershkowitz (MDDF-Ret)

An accepted truth is that a mind is a terrible thing to waste. What most seem to overlook is that a mind rich in knowledge and experience is so much worse to waste. Yet, we continue to enforce age threshold retirement and then cast away what might be experienced solutions for overworked, under-resourced managers.

The State Guard (SG) or State Defense Force (SDF) is one such organization that traditionally suffers from both types of resource deprivation: funding and personnel. It is the rare and privileged SDF (to be used herein for both SG and SDF) that has sufficient funding to purchase the necessary material and equipment to carry out all its desired missions or even to conduct the necessary exercises in preparation for those missions. Likewise, it is the fortunate SDF whose Table of Organization (TO) permits sufficient and qualified personnel to sufficiently staff appropriate mission oriented units.

Some Adjutants General have found a way to partially resolve the staffing deficit through the establishment of a "Reserve" sometimes referred to as the "Minutemen." The Minutemen augment the SDF without encumbering TO slots or preventing promotion potential of members of the regular SDF.

One benefit of a Minutemen-like Reserve is that they do not have to participate in line unit functions or missions; thus, the restrictions on age and health are less vital than for members of the regular SDF. Another benefit is that Minutemen can be selectively called in (not called up) according to their expertise and availability to perform a specific task and then leave when it is completed. In this manner, SDF Command can seek out and "recruit" Minutemen with special knowledge and experience to augment their organization's capabilities.

Since Minutemen function in an advisory capacity to the SDF Commanding General, the Chief of Staff and major sub-command leaders, their age and rank are not limited to SDF mandatory age, health and TO requirements. Further more, while most SDF members work full or near full time, Minutemen could be mostly retired; therefore, available for more intense activity, completing tasks in a shorter period of time.

An additional benefit of establishing a Minutemen-like Advisory Reserve is that individuals who would not normally join a regular SDF unit because of the need to attend mandatory drills and musters now would be tempted to provide this service to their State and Military Department. Because the attendance requirement does not exist, individuals with special expertise and/or experience residing outside the State can be identified to assist the SDF Command by performing special tasks as part of the SDF's Minutemen. Such opportunity to provide service would permit the SDF Command to actively seek those specialists needed for a variety of tasks for which the expertise or availability does not exist within the Command.

Since the TO restriction does not regulate the rank of Minutemen, for those specialists who have not held a military rank previously or held a rank far below their current knowledge and experience, the

SDF Commanding General can recommend an appropriate rank to be approved by the State Adjutant General. The rank of General Officer would not be available under these circumstances.

In order to avoid the aura of an elite unit, the Minutemen need to obtain and wear the same uniform, badge of rank, unit epaulet pin, name plate, beret flash, shoulder patch and dress uniform buttons as the members of the regular SDF. In order to differentiate between members of the regular SDF and those of the Minutemen, the Minutemen's red name plate can be backed up by a felt rectangle of black or white or blue, or any color that each SDF unit determines is appropriate.