

NATIONAL DEFENSE *Means* TEAMWORK

By Brig. Gen. JESUS VARGAS

THESE are troubled times. All over the world today there exists a life-and-death struggle between two opposite ways of life—one representing state control and the other a free way of life. In the fight to perpetuate the pattern of living that free nations hold dear, it is no longer logical to say that we do not want involvement, that we will not commit ourselves to it. When what we cherish is threatened it is incumbent upon us to meet the challenge, whatever and wherever the challenge may be.

It is to our eternal credit as a nation that we have not only decided to meet the challenge but are actually meeting it. A few days ago, I again had the good opportunity of touring the Korean war front and of seeing with my own eyes the cruel conduct of that war. I have seen, as in my previous visit there, the havoc and destruction, the ravage and toll of that war over both lives and properties. I have seen in the faces of the Korean refugees I encountered the unmistakable suffering of a people whose land has been encroached upon by Communists. And I have seen on the faces of our men and other allied nations soldiers the clear signs of determination to vanquish the Red aggressors.

I have emerged from that trip more convinced than ever that, to secure to ourselves and to our unborn generation the freedoms and the independence that we have so dearly achieved, we must not only be willing to fight but we must be trained to fight as well. We can never over-

emphasize the value of any training in any branch of our Armed Forces. In our scheme of national defense there is no doubt that no less important than the Army, the PC or the Air Force is the Navy, without which our Armed Forces is not complete. We must be effective on land as well as in the air and on the sea. For while guarding our land and our skies we must not in any way leave our sea lanes open to invaders.

National defense today means teamwork among the various components of our Armed Forces. Our Armed Forces is divided into several major services but in reality is but one organization. Any member of the Armed Forces, therefore, is a member of the big Army-PC-Navy-Air Force team. In this regard I wish to stress the frequently repeated maxim that "a chain is only as strong as its weakest link," or that "an organization is no more effective than the members composing it." The truth of these statements is not hard to see. If we allow one segment of our organization to weaken, if we permit our efforts in one phase of our defense work to slacken, the entire defense establishment will be rendered impotent.

But mere unity will not achieve our goal. We can have the best teamwork and coordination in the world but if we can not do the job with "peak efficiency" we are not likely to succeed. Likewise, we can be the best individually trained Armed Forces in the world but if we cannot work effectively as a team we are lost. There is a cause-and-effect relationship between training and teamwork; one is not complete without the other.