

to its citizens. That obligation includes protection to our people. It was for this reason that more than a year ago I asked the Maryland General Assembly to authorize the creation of the State Guard, the primary purpose of which was to have a mobile protective force ready to move in any direction to maintain the safety and security of our people and their property. It is with pleasure that I can report to our people that the State Guard is completely drilling.

The State Guard numbers approximately 2,700 officers and men. Supplementing it is a Special Military Police Force, the members of which are on continuous duty and assigned exclusively to the guarding of our State's bridges, important water supplies, and other vital points, described by the War Department as having important bearing on the war effort. The number of this force is approximately 300.

To the credit of the members of our present Guard, it can be said that they have responded to every requirement since our Nation entered the war, despite unexpected difficulties under which they have at times been required to perform their duties. The public will understand that up until now the State's defensive efforts have consisted mainly in protecting those installations and locations which the War Department consider as vitally important.

Now, however, a greater possible danger must be faced by our people. Situated as we are and exposed as our State is, we must be prepared for the worst. Since the outbreak of hostilities at Pearl Harbor, I have been in touch, at regular intervals, with United States officials who have imparted information revealing the danger that besets us. I owe it to the people of the State to report that we are in jeopardy, and that we must be prepared for trouble both from without and from within our State.

Only today, for instance, have I been advised by the Commanding General of the First Army, in New York, that the presence and increasing activity of enemy submarines off the Maryland Coast require additional drastic measures.

With the prospect that the regular Army units will be engaged in more important operations elsewhere, and with our State Guard and Military Police assigned to particular functions, it is felt absolutely necessary to have an additional protective force—as a home guard—for the protection of our various communities. Competent military officers, one of whom, our capable and experienced Major General Milton A. Reckord, will speak to you in a few minutes, advise that there is need of this further, wide-spread, alert defense organization to cope with and to be available instantly for any sudden attack by parachute troops, by forces landed from the sea by enemy sympathizers within our State.

I propose to meet this need by the organization in every part of the State of a Reserve Militia. The completed plan has just been approved by General Reckord, as Commander of the Third Army Corps. It offers the opportunity for every able-bodied man to assist in protecting his home and his community against enemy activities. The militia will be organized under our State Law,