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President

National Guard Association
of the United States

NGAUS' Silent Majority

BEFORE this issue of "THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN" is distributed, an Ad Hoc Committee will have been appointed to conduct a thorough study of our Association, its goals, organization, resources, headquarters staff structure, and methods of operation. It will have been given until next June to complete its work and submit recommendations for any alterations it considers desirable.

The composition of the Committee will have been determined on November 22, also too late for inclusion in this issue.

The sole purpose of conducting such an extensive re-evaluation of NGAUS is to make our organization more effective in *establishing* and *attaining* worthwhile objectives. Those objectives must be important, relevant to the times, and responsive alike to the changing requirements of National defense and the needs and desires of the membership. Over and above this, they must be attainable, and our organization must be so structured and operated as to attain them in the most effective manner consistent with our resources. Times change and so does the environment in which we must function as we seek to build a better National Guard and a stronger Association. We too must be prepared to change, whenever change will produce greater effectiveness.

It would not be appropriate for me to comment in detail on specific subjects before the Committee has had an opportunity to acquaint itself with the task which faces it. I do not believe I will be encroaching on the Committee's prerogatives, though, if I discuss one subject with which the NGAUS, and all organized groups of whatever nature continually must concern themselves. This is the area we call *membership participation*, or how to involve the greatest number of members, more deeply, in the decision-making and management of Association affairs.

The effectiveness of an organization is directly and importantly influenced by the degree and extent of participation by its individual members. It likewise is influenced by the ability of its members to think and act on the basis of reasoned judgement rather than emotionalism and by their understanding of the processes of government at the National level. In the NGAUS, we have a huge reservoir of ability, imagination and energy. It is our "silent majority," composed largely of parttime officers in the company and lower field-grade categories, youthful in both age and outlook.

I have attempted to draw on this reservoir of talent during the six years I have served the NGAUS as its President by bringing newer, younger officers into our various committees. I was encouraged when, at Mobile, Delegates from one Army Area took another step forward by naming two Colonels to represent them on the Executive Council, our highest decision-making body. This is the first time in many years that we have dipped below the General officer level to fill the ranks of the Council, and it offers a hopeful sign.

In addition, I have increased the flow of information to leaders of our many State Associations, and have sought their opinion on numerous matters. This, too, has been a way of acquainting a larger proportion of our membership with our goals and our labors in their behalf.

But I am sure that additional means are available to us of insuring that the voice of each member is heard, and that he understands and supports the efforts we exert in behalf of the entire National Guard.

The Ad Hoc Committee will have performed a significant service to the Association and to the Guard if it suggests additional ways of converting this silent majority of members into thoughtful, involved, working participants.



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There was "meat" in what the speakers had to tell NGAUS General Conference Delegates.

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