



Major General William J. McCaddin, President, NGAUS

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### FAREWELL TO A PIECE OF NGAUS HISTORY

There have been many Presidents' Messages in this space which have been more complex in nature than the one on which we are about to embark. But none have been more profound—in the sense that this one is about friendship.

In the combative world of Washington, D.C., with its penchant for complexity, the set-piece formulation of battle lines and its confrontation environment, there is an occasional breath of fresh air. It is not too frequently encountered in this town. But it is easy to recognize and enjoyable to experience, once you get over the initial shock.

This explanation is a prelude to the simple fact that this month's Message is a farewell, and a tribute, to a friend. Colonel Wilford D. ("Mac") McGlasson is retiring as the Deputy Executive Vice President of the National Guard Association after 22 years on the job.

Mac will probably shudder when he reads this. He has deliberately honed the art of acting mean and cantankerous in the way newspapermen have been portrayed in legendary movies and shows like "Front Page." As he has moved up through the ladder of NGAUS from the magazine staff to executive status, he has remained a newspaperman at heart—and militantly proud of it.

He will unquestionably be horrified to find that there are those of us who do regard him as a breath of fresh air in the all-too-crass environment of our Nation's Capitol. Mac is known to many of us for a give-away twinkle in his eye when he has been a party to a patently pointless briefing or press conference. And when he summarizes such an event the word he uses is not likely to be "horsefeathers!"

Mac came east from southern California just over two decades ago to join the staff of THE NATIONAL GUARD. He had, even then, the leathery look

of one who spent a lot of time outdoors and he affected the manner of classic newspaperman, dangling cigarette and all. Some began to see through his pose when he showed surprise that it snowed in Washington in the wintertime!

He represents a sort of "middle period" in the modern history of the Association. The fuzzy, post-WWII years were slipping away as Mac came upon the scene. In fact, the Association was in the process of building and moving into the fine edifice now known as the National Guard Memorial. The building matured and took its place as one of the landmarks in the small but busy community of military-oriented associations working the Pentagon and Capitol Hill—and McGlasson matured and grew with it.

Since the editors of NATIONAL GUARD are providing a story about Mac's retirement from the Association on May 1, no effort will be made in this column to spell out the detail of his career, either as a Guardsman (which he has always been, first and foremost), as an Association executive, as a newspaperman, as a veteran of the wars in which he fought or went off to visit, or of his skill as a coordinator of national conferences, etc.

None of these important aspects of his long career are nearly as important as two other qualities which come to mind. One of these is perhaps best described as his endless pursuit of high standards—particularly with respect to the use of the written word. Even as we write these lines we feel, inevitably, that the language will probably make Mac wince. Few men we have encountered have had more of a life-long romance with their mother tongue. The relaxed patterns of recent years—especially among radio and television broadcasters—has been an abomination McGlasson does not like to contemplate.

His colorful invective was, and con-

tinues to be, aroused by examples of "pentagonese" and "academic jargon." But because communication is an important element of our business as an Association seeking to keep 48,000 members and many hundreds of others informed, no one around One Massachusetts Avenue seriously quarreled with Mac when he wielded his dagger-like blue pencil. It didn't take newcomers—even including Association presidents—very long to find out that he knew what he was doing. And anything we wrote was always the better for what Mac had to contribute to it.

Being a perfectionist and an addict to detail has its penalties. Mac has sometimes marched a long and, we suspect, frustrating road. Like most men who pursue their way with conviction and dedication, he frequently found it hard to compromise. But he had the staying power and the officers and staff of the Association learned to live with the benevolent tyranny Mac exercised in his quest to meet deadlines and to extend the influence of the National Guard Association.

The last quality which characterizes him is also the best—and that is his great capacity for friendship. Not the backslapping kind of friendship—because that simply is not his style. His brand of friendship is the best kind, because it is real.

It is one of the sad things about the nature of national associations that much of what staff members accomplish is within the realm of relative anonymity. While Mac has become known by many during his years, there are probably many more who—time and place being what it is—never got to know him, or who may know him only as a name in the magazine or on a program roster. That's too bad. He is someone worth knowing and we hate to see him go.

And that's no "Horsefeathers!"

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COVER: West German and Minnesota Air National Guard RF-4Cs team up for a mission over Germany. Design by Tom Powers of Bill Duffy Associates with photo courtesy of 148th TRG, MnANG.

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